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Bequest of the late
JOHN H. R. MOLSON



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Jesus.

J E S U S ;

A Poem,

IN SIX BOOKS.

ETC. ETC.

BY

HENRY STEBBING, D.D., F.R.S.

LONDON:

ARTHUR HALL VIRTUE, & CO., PATERNOSTER ROW.

1851

ARTHUR

Slee and Son, Printers,
Marshall Street, Golden Square,
London.

PREFACE.

In publishing the following poem I have two statements to make, in the way of apology for its appearance. It expresses feelings which sought expression; and a corresponding impulse gave them a poetic form. I found the lassitude attendant upon a very laborious life pleasantly broken by the return of emotions which made poetry the first medium of my thoughts.

But the subject of the poem is of more concern to the reader, than the feelings in which it originated. In my brief visits to the great picture galleries of Italy, and other parts of the Continent, I have always been struck with the perpetual recurrence of some few holy and divine forms in the productions of artists distinguished from each other by every variety of style, and degrees of excellence. Few people could be found who would not regret the loss of even the least important of these productions. They are all valued, because each tends to promote the development of ideas with which every thoughtful mind is more or less occupied.

I felt, therefore, that I could not be committing an offence against good taste in attempting a poem like the following. Had I been an artist, I should have rejoiced to exhibit in form and colour the impressions made upon my mind by the study of

the Evangelical records. Having only language at my command, I have used it in the best way I could to pourtray the image of the Saviour as stamped upon my thoughts, and to delineate such circumstances in his history as have most vividly influenced my imagination.

However faint or imperfect the delineation, it will not be altogether without its value to some readers. It is the representation of forms created by a simple and direct resignation of the mind to the Scripture narrative. With the exception of Milton's *Paradise Regained*, I am a stranger to all poems written on this theme. Much as I have read of German, I have never read Klopstock. This, I am sure, has not been from undervaluing such writers; but from those accidents of a busy life which often prevent our indulging our best tastes and wishes.

I would claim one indulgence of the reader. The poem has been written in a spirit of humble, earnest thoughtfulness; let it be perused with a corresponding temper.

London, December 28, 1850.

BOOK I.

ARGUMENT.

Invocation. The Natural Desert: its wastes refertilized. Such is the revival produced in the moral world by the Gospel. The progress of the human race. Change attendant on the birth of Jesus. The Magi. Flight into Egypt. Nazareth. John the Baptist and Jesus.

Book the First.



Saviour divine ! O thou to whom I owe
The sense of a new life, and hope renewed,
To Thee I consecrate my song—to Thee
Devote the thoughts which best engage my heart.
The world had lost for me whate'er it had
Of good or beauty ; and the golden store,
Which nature heaps around us as we stray
Along well-chosen paths had ceased to win
Even the vagrant wishes of my soul.
Day after day the loathing weariness,
The fear of toil, the dread of something worse
Than all that had been yet, these things appall'd
And wore my heart away : I was as one
Who lived because he must live : and no more.

Almighty and all merciful ! to Thee
 The praise be given for that which now I feel !
 Once more the hope of good, a sense of joy
 Gives birth to thought : once more bright images
 Dance in the fair horizon of my mind,
 Sun-lit, and many-hued, a gorgeous train,
 Such as becomes prophetic eve, when day
 Has sown the seed which shall enrich to-morrow.
 And this, all this, I owe to Thee blest Lord !
 Jesus ! the resurrection and the life ;
 As much to me, in mine own self, and now
 A resurrection-power, and vital strength,
 As thou shalt be, though in more perfect wise,
 When the rude fetters shall be struck away
 Which hold in bondage universal man.
 And that reviving force which moves my heart
 Moves myriad others : where, although the life
 Wakes not the man entire, the quickened mind
 Will own the truth which stirs it, and reflect
 Whate'er it has of light upon the world :
 Till far around a faint but lovely gleam,
 The dawn of eras new, invests the scene.

Behold yon arid waste in pathless gloom !
 The billowy sand just feels the rising storm,

Born in the furnace of the smeltering air.
 Confusion reigns around ; and death would come
 To aid the turmoil, but nought lives to slay :
 And yet 'twould seem as if in times gone by,
 The manifold springs and powers of life had there
 Wrought their accustomed wonders : for tis said
 That oft the Syrian merchant, in his way
 To the far Ind, hath traced foundations deep,
 And marble columns and mysterious forms
 Of olden worship, which the fathomless sands
 Covering for ages only then revealed,
 When the fierce winds upturned the desert waves.
 But darker is the gloom where light hath been
 And now is not : and awful is the thought
 That o'er those measureless regions which the eye
 Of fancy now in sober mood beholds,
 Empires and cities, (states concentrated)
 Opened their crowded high-ways, and proclaimed
 Their prowess to the world, to be at length
 Less than the poorest tract of rural land
 Where one poor shepherd has a home and name.

But let the vital power, which in, and by,
 A deified humanity can act,

Begin its work among those sterile wastes.
 'Tis not the fierce simoom which now bestirs
 The arid mass ; but the sweet breath of life.
 No cloudy deluge now o'erwhelms the wild,
 But dews of heavenly blessing and delight.
 And see ! the tender grass begins to spring
 Luxuriously soft and green, as when
 May first revisits sunny slopes and lawns
 In favoured temperate climes and gladsome lands.
 And here and there young flower-buds deck the soil,
 Soon followed by bright plants of rosier hue,
 And then by purpling clusters, and fair ranks
 Of trees whose golden blossoms only wait
 Another pulse of life to show what fruit,
 Precious and rich, their fragrant bloom enfolds.
 And thus the desert has again become
 What that, and all lands were, when dawned the sun
 In virgin loveliness,—a green expanse;
 A home prepared by Him who is the life
 For all that may hereafter live. And lo !
 But once the star mysterious which pursues
 His errant course beyond our measured sphere,
 His journey has fulfilled, and all around
 That beauteous extent of verdant land.
 Dwell joyous tribes of mind-illumined men.

Nor deem such thought a fable: that which He
 Whose praise we sing can for the desert do
 His word has wrought, where death more darkly reigned
 Than in the sandy waste, or on the flood
 Of sulphurous lakes, or on the rock-bound shore
 Of seas whose waters never keel has ploughed.
 The world but lives where man has all the life,
 Which his Creator gave him at the first.
 Where man is reft of aught which gives to life
 Its proper structure, its essential grace,
 Where that which is the life of life is gone,
 Love, truth, or liberty, there man is lost,
 And with him nature falls; for to his heart
 Mysteriously has God bound all the strings
 Which hold this world suspended o'er the deep.
 Trace but the course of nations to the day
 When He who captive led captivity,
 Unsealed the fountain of eternal truth,
 And let it pour its fulness o'er the world;
 Take for thy guide historic truth, and see
 The path which universal man hath trod,
 And thou wilt gladly own, that desert wilds
 Made rich by Heaven—blessed toil, or miracle—
 Present no spectacle so vast or grand,

As that which grows before us as we view
 The world inbreathing light and life from Heaven,
 Through Him its Lord, Creator, Saviour, Friend !

In earliest days majestic was the thought
 Which bore man forward from his pristine home.
 He felt the primal grandeur of his race,
 Knew that the world was his by grant divine.
 Had not this proud conviction fired his heart,
 The vales of Ararat, and Shinar's plains,
 Had soon become like over-crowded folds;
 And the bold spirit of adventurous tribes
 Had fall'n oppressed by plagues untimely born.
 But like a flood which from some mountain hoar
 Takes its deep spring and knows that spring is deep,
 Nor ever in its course like shallower streams
 Pauses or deviates from its track profound,
 So passed along the thickening multitudes
 Of young heroic families, till now
 The wide extended earth, hill, plain and vale,
 And the broad shores expanding to the verge
 Of unknown seas, bore witness to the power
 Of man, and man's predestined sovereignty.

And glorious were the visions which arose
 Upon the path of many a sire who led
 His children onwards to those fertile lands,
 Where heaven had placed their home. Superbly grand,
 The majesty of thrones, the armed pomp
 Of nations in their proud maturity,
 To aged eyes prophetic rose sublime,
 And filled with gorgeous pageantry of hope
 The scenic halls of time. As centuries passed,
 So passed away the vision and the dream,
 The solemn structures which the spirit had raised
 To fill men's souls with energy to dare.
 They were the pattern shown them in the mount :
 'The forms ideal living in the realms
 Of holy destiny. And as they shrunk
 Back to their source, behold, in firm array,
 What they had pictured to the world became
 Realities of act, of deed, of form.
 And glorious had these been as even thought,
 In its most perfect mood had fondly deemed
 The proper offspring of this nether sphere.
 But 'mid the growing splendours of the race,
 From golden spheres concentric ;—multiplied
 By each succeeding age, and marked by steps

Of heroes, sages, saints ; from palaces,
 Temples, and marts, and academic groves,
 Rose poisonous vapours, which, transformed on high
 Into the semblance of the heavens they hid,
 Shot forth bright meteors, and allured mankind
 From every path of duty and of life.
 Among the tangled mazes where, concealed
 Beneath the tree of knowledge, error lay,
 They drank the deadly draught which turns the heart
 Into base earth, or hardens it to stone.

And then began the spirit, which of old
 Had failed at Babel, to renew his strength :
 A loftier, mightier Babel now his aim,
 One that should rise, not in ideal height
 To scale the visible heavens, but by minds
 Rising on minds : thoughts heaped on thoughts sublime ;
 And spirits linked together, soaring up,
 And poised upon the dizzy pinnacles
 Of speculation's airy citadel.

But wakeful still, the Ruler of the Skies
 Looked from his throne, as He had done of yore,
 And spread confusion 'mid the daring hosts

Of earth's proud conquerers. New systems rose,
 New creeds, new forms of policy, and each
 Had its own language: Union was lost:
 And wisdom walked confounded and dismayed
 Amid the crowds that blindly sought her fane.
 One mighty voice alone distinct was heard,
 The voice of tyrant empire; who had grasped,
 In his mailed hand, the banners and the spoil
 Of weaker tyrants and their trembling hordes.

Beneath that voice the awe-struck world grew still:
 Men's hearts no longer beat with natural force;
 Barbaric freedom hid herself in caves,
 And forest-wilds, where mighty rivers swept
 Majestical along, in seeming scorn
 Of all that were not glorious as themselves.
 The shout of war, the tramp of battle ceased:
 Nations no longer dare confess they heard
 The voices of their fathers, or the cry
 From hearths and altars which oft-times arose,
 When in some fit of noble grief they mused
 On deeds they loved, but dared not imitate.

That was the reign of peace: misnomer great!
 Peace dwells not in a world, or land enslaved.

Peace is the free man's well-earned rest and joy :
 The quiet and security of rights,
 Wrung in a desperate struggle from the foe
 Of truth and nature, and harmonious laws.
 But though no sacred peace could bless the world
 While man enslaved, unworthy of the boon,
 Worshipped the image of his tyrant lord :
 Yet o'er the earth mysterious repose
 Fell with a wonderous charm, as if from heaven
 Music were breathing, and the furious waves
 Of phrenzied passion heard it, and were still.
 And 'mid that quiet,—sign and type sublime—
 Jesus ! adored deliverer, didst Thou come,
 Come as an infant stranger to this earth,
 Environed with all heaven's invisible pomp,
 But meek as poor humanity itself.

Thou canst unfold, Spirit supreme of truth !
 That which the heart would most delight to know ;
 How by deep channels, and by secret ways,
 From the full fountain of the Saviour's soul,
 Power, light and love, transfused into the mass
 Of sensual, slumbering multitudes, aroused
 The world itself to a new sense of life.

Yea, Son of the Most High, when Thou didst come,
 And bind thy heavenly nature to our own,
 What hearts remote, or spirits most supine
 Could fail to own the wond'rous change begun?

When night, long brooding on the earth, beholds
 From some hoar precipice the distant gleam
 Of orient splendour; and the virgin dawn
 Peeps out behind the chariot of the sun,
 With trembling wings he sweeps along the plains,
 Till finding some remoter home, he leaves
The astounded world in the embrace of day.
 Then far and wide, flows on the vital stream;
 Fountains gush up and fill the vacant heart,
 With a strange fulness of delight and joy.
 Men greet each other as if each had found
 Some precious pearl, or gold-mine in his field.
 And what the source of all this general glee?
 The presence of one genial orb of light.

So Jesus, by a mystery more sublime,
 While thou wert slumbering in thy cradle rude,
 Or happier on thy mother's virgin breast,
 Didst smile with joy ineffable, despair,

And the dread form of death, and palsied doubt,
 Envy and hate and jealousy, betrayed
 Their consciousness that thou, great friend of man!
 Wert come to spoil them of his inmost heart.
 And minds of gentle mood, spirits sedate,
 And others of a loftier strain, and those
 Whom grief had taught to think, but not to pray;
 Breathed a fresh atmosphere of hope and health.
 Nor Bethlehem, nor Tabor, nor the Mount,
 On which thy blood, dear lamb of God, was shed;
 Nor Jordan's sacred stream, nor that fair lake,
 Gennesareth, upon whose rocky marge,
 Thy solemn tender voice so oft was heard:
 Nor these, nor aught that prophet told, or type
 Prefigured, ever had their thoughts engaged:
 And yet thy presence in the world to them
 Was redolent of bliss, as the sweet spring
 Seated on up-land slopes, or sunny fields,
 Sheds her glad influence o'er the wakeful flowers
 That watch for sun-lit dew in forest-glades.

A change came o'er the universal mind,—
 The universal heart. Predictive thought,
 Impelled the few to look with deeper aim

At that which God had written on their souls.
 Others though earthly still, more anxious grew
 To know if all were earthly as themselves:
 Or if there might not be some resting-place,
 Where care and the long agonies of life
 Would cease to be though life itself remained.
 Nor were there wanting those who silently
 Treading their quiet path-way through the world,
 Needed but one sweet hope to make their lot
 All that their unambitious spirits wished.
 And what was that they sighed for, but to know
 If those they loved would not be lost in death?
 Or if there were no blessed charm; no power
 Involved in the complexities of fate,
 Which in its destined course might bring again
 The same dear beings to the same fond heart.

And didst not thou, compassionate Jesus, give,
 Even by the common influence of thy grace,
 And by the lustre which around thee streamed,
 And by the very life which thou didst breathe
 Upon the world, thou unknown King of Kings?—
 O didst thou not, thyself essential life,
 Speak wondrous things to that humanity,
 Of which thou wert become the head and soul,

Long ere thy lips thy saving power confessed?
 For not as yet in plenitude of love,
 Was thy will sovereign o'er the lot of man.
 'Twas thine to purchase with thy blood the right
 To save and renovate the forfeit soul.

From Bethlehem to the Temple's hallowed shrine,
 Where homage due awaits Thee blessed Lord!
 We follow Thee in vision and in prayer.
 Happy that aged man to whom 'twas given
 The first of all earth's children to embrace
 Thee as the Saviour of thy kind: to press
 That heart of hearts to his now growing cold:
 To let his rayless eyes rest fond on thine,
 And thence draw light into his inmost soul.

And happy she who bowed beneath the load
 Of years and sorrow, but with mind elate,
 Now felt that there was joy for hearts like hers,
 That cherished some dear image, and had borne
 All cares and griefs in patience, so that God
 Might let them come and bring remembered love
 To hear his blessing, and so live again,—
 Happy those faithful worshippers! through them,
 Old age beheld time's conqueror, and learnt

How all the burdens it is doomed to bear,
 How all the chilling memories of wrong,
 Grow light or vanish where the Saviour is.

And other worshippers are hastening on
 To offer homage to their infant lord.
 Heaven sheds its golden beams upon their path :
 Heaven fills their hearts with hope. They come as men,
 Sent from the world's remotest bounds to bring
 Due tribute to the world's deliverer.
 With gold and frankincense and myrrh they bear
 The richer offering of faith and love ;
 And pour from their glad souls the treasured thoughts
 Which heaven first gave them, as they watchful traced
 Through the long night the signs significant
 Of a supreme beneficence. And thus
 Those sages from Chaldea's distant plains,
 Filled with divine presentiments, and led
 By light divine, before the Saviour stood,
 The first of those whose glorious fate it is
 To blend in one symphonious design
 Knowledge supreme with faith's diviner aim.
 And who can tell with what ecstatic joy
 Those bless'd and favoured men retraced their way
 O'er peopled plains and intervening wastes,

To their own home and tribes ? They bear with them
 The wealth of a new world ; of spheres till now
 Seen but in dreams. Jesus to them hath been
 As a bright portal opening to the realms
 Where stars unveil themselves, and each becomes
 A hoped-for paradise ; and where the beam
 Of love divine, fulfilling love's decree,
 Gives to all forms its own resplendent grace.

There were among their kin inquiring minds
 Which yearned to know what vision, voice or sign,
 Had led them to that land, so famed of old,
 For miracle and rich prophetic lore.
 And full of quickening might and impulses
 Sublimely grand ; of thoughts and rapturous dreams,
 Was every word which from those sages fell,
 As with uplifted hand, and look entranced,
 They spoke of Him whose sceptre should suffice
 To crush the power of evil, and restore
 Freedom to those sweet movements of the will
 Which once, 'twas said, had lifted souls to heaven,
 But now, by loving force, brought heaven to earth.

And this divinely planted hope remained

A spirit of new life to all that race ;
 Inhabitants of a land remote, obscure,
 Hedged round by a mysterious decree,
 Which gave them light, as of the cheering sun,
 Ere his first rays had dawned upon the world.

But while, dear Son of God, a wondrous sense
 Of thy supreme and saving love inspired
 Some chosen hearts, behold, upon thy path
 The ruthless foe of holiness and truth,
 Has raised his arm, and led his murderous band,
 With hate instinctive thirsting for that blood,
 Which, as a fountain sealed, no power shall spill
 Till Thou thyself shalt give the treasure up.
 Yet Lamb of God ! Thy sufferings have begun !
 Dearer to Thee than thine own blood, a band
 Of innocent martyrs bare their infant breasts :
 And as the ruddy stream flows gurgling forth
 Mingling with burning tears, and heavy sobs,
 From poor, distracted mothers,—Lamb of God,
 Meek, loving Jesus, anxious sacrifice !
 Dost Thou not feel a pang so keen and deep
 That even already, infant as Thou art,
 Thy frame seems pierced and shuddering on the Cross ?

Stars in their secret courses stir the air
 With force mysterious ; and the clouded sun
 Commands the spheres, though not an eye beholds
 The sceptre that he wields : So Jesus Thou
 Didst pass unheeded to that awful land
 Where the dark forms of old idolatry
 Still wait the doom which Thou at last shalt speak.
 Unheeded Thou didst pass : but not unfelt
 The power which dwelt about Thee. In that hour
 When thou wert borne upon thy mother's breast
 'Tween Bethlehem and Egypt's gloomy wastes,
 The sentence was pronounced that soon with Thee
 Would God from exile call his children home.

Sad Nazareth ! thou most despised and base
 Of peopled spots upon this populous globe,
 'Twas now with thee, as a neglected vase,
 Chosen awhile to bear some precious gum ;
 Or old, disfigured casket into which
 The owner of some priceless gem has cast
 The treasured wonder, more admired as seen
 In such poor keeping. Nazareth to thee
 God gave his Son to be a sojourner ;
 To dwell among thy children, and to share

The scorn, neglect, and all the saddening wants
 That left them heartless, or with hearts so bowed
 By misery, that neither thought nor will,
 E'er cared to own the sovereign power of truth.
 Yet doubt we not that oft as Jesus now,
 In pure and fervent youth ; with soul serene,
 But lofty, quick, and full of grandest hope,
 Conversed among that prostrate race of men,
 Some felt new thoughts awake, new feelings roused,
 And sympathy profound, unknown before,
 With nature and with all that spoke of heaven.
 Fit scene for such communings, yonder vale,
 Where holy evening falls with such a breadth
 Of tranquil radiance, that 'twere not profane
 To think a band of Angels present there ;
 Veiling their lustre, but with smiles divine
 Giving a deeper sweetness to the hour.
 Or, for severer thought, that barren sweep
 Of rugged rocks, precipitous, and stern
 In naked whiteness, where no shepherd e'er
 Or goatherd led his flocks ; or vinedresser,
 Or frugal rustic thought to find reward
 For patient efforts of laborious toil.
 Not, Jesus, there, perchance, thy loving soul
 Attuned to all sweet harmonies, had sought

Retreat: not there thy lonely step had traced
 A pathway mid the waste of rocks, for Thou,
 Even when portentous visions hemmed Thee round,
 Wert filled with joy intense : and images
 Of glorious beauty ; of ecstatic life,
 Resplendent with the golden links which bind
 Being to being,—these were the forms, dear lord,
 Which Thou, obeying thine own gentle will,
 Would'st ever with delighted gaze have sought.
 But not so he, companion of thy way,
 That youth of stern and melancholy brow,
 Whose looks proclaim that as the need may be
 He can be prophet, hero, martyr, sage.

Upon yon devious mountain path they meet,
 And quick embrace, and eager greeting tell
 That 'tis but rare they meet. A careful eye
 May trace such likeness in their lineaments
 As common kindred and descent impart :
 But striking is the contrast otherwise
 Between the looks and bearing of those youths.
 The one is lofty in his port ; his step
 Like that of some young warrior, filled with thought
 Of great emprise. His dark eye flashes scorn
 As at some vision of assembled foes

Insulting God and trampling on his laws,
 O'er his broad shoulders and his ample breast,
 Fall the thick clusters of his raven locks,
 The hue of ruddiest health is on his cheek,
 And as he grasps the staff which he has borne
 In his long journey from the mountain lands
 Of distant Hebron, you may tell that he
 Has thoughts and feelings which will not consort
 With home or its sweet quietness. A voice
 Has called him forth, and he can never rest
 Till the great task allotted him be done.

Different the mien of him who standing now
 Upon yon jutting rock which overhangs
 The vale of Nazareth, points out the spot
 Where he has passed his childhood. In his eye
 Beams a deep lustre, pure, intense and still,
 As that of Eastern seas which only light
 Can fathom. Pale, not wan his face, which shows,
 By its brown tint that he hath strength to bear,
 The noon-tide heat, travail, and frequent toil.
 But delicate is his form, as that of one
 Whose soul will have no more of earth than just
 Suffices for humanity : for the power,

To act or suffer, to endure the pangs
 Which justice may appoint, or fate decree
 As the fit price of victory and its crown.
 Long in deep converse strayed those wondrous youths.
 Their talk was of great things revealed of old
 By prophets to their sires : and oft their eyes
 Were filled with melting rapture and amaze.
 For floods of solemn thought rushed through their souls,
 And oft mysterious words which each had heard
 Drop from parental lips ; and many dreams
 Of their own childhood, all unlike the rest
 Of their mere healthful infancy, now became
 Fresh revelations to their throbbing hearts.

When evening came they sat in sweet repose
 Beside a humble porch ; narrow and low,
 As any in poor Nazareth, but unlike
 The rest in this, that over it were trained
 Thick clustering roses of the fragrant stock
 Of Hermon ; and their deep vermillion hues
 Were mingled with the green and purple dies
 Of a luxuriant vine, whose branches hung,
 Arch-wise, their rich and curious tracery
 Down to the ground. And now the twilight falls
 O'er the wide valley, and the barren hills

Rise in the distance spectre-like. The birds
 Have sought their nests: and by the well were erst
 A busy throng of laughing maidens stood
 Only one aged woman waits to end
 More quietly her weary toil. So still,
 So solemnly the shades of evening spread,
 Till the broad moon with rapid glory fills
 The whole deep concave, and the azure vault
 Lets fall the liquid beauty in a shower
 Of quivering light. And whispering winds awake,
 As if fond nature who hath lulled asleep
 Her varied offspring, wakeful still herself,
 Were uttering o'er them her dear benison.

And happy wert Thou, blessed Jesus now,
 For thou didst feel that there was in thy soul
 An energy which could transfuse itself
 Through all that fair expanse of loveliness.
 And happy too for that beside Thee sate,
 Thy virgin-mother, who delighted breathed
 Responses to thy thoughts; so fondly true
 That never echo in her sylvan cave
 Returned sweet sounds with more exact accord
 Than did thy mother's heart the pulse of thine.

And long they sat, the mother and the son,
 And their loved guest from Hebron. Hope sublime
 Had wreathed around their brows a lambent crown
 Of heavenly light: but ever and anon
 Their eyes o'erflowed with tears, and the meek face
 Of that most blessed of women became pale
 In the still moonlight, as the countenance
 Of one whom death hath just transfigured
 Into the form of saintly grace, awaiting
 The bright suffusion of the roseate tints
 Of the new youth from the new life within.

At length the light which, though it tells of morn,
 Is earlier than the morn, passed o'er the hills:
 And the one star, which knows so well how pure
 The radiance of its golden lustre is
 That it dare front the day, came beckoning out:
 While the young stranger by his earnest look
 Seemed to regard its orb as one who long
 Had been familiar with some solemn thought
 Awakened at its summons. He arose,
 And with brief greeting hastened down the vale,
 And soon was seen upon the distant steep,
 Treading with quickening step his homeward way.

BOOK II.

ARGUMENT.

A traveller lost amid the windings of a forest. Pilgrims unexpectedly stopped in their course by unknown seas : such was the condition of mankind till Christ appeared as their way and guide. His early character. Discipline. Leaves Nazareth. Preaching of John the Baptist. The Temptation in the Wilderness. On the Pinnacle of the Temple. Jesus journeys from Jerusalem to Nazareth. Description of the Country.

Book the Second.



There is a traveller in the pathless woods :
Long time has he the tangled mazes trod,
Catching each fitful gleam of light to trace
What seems a way, winding, but opening still
Through the deep gloom. From morn till night has he
Watched every sign which either sun or star,
Or whispering wind, could give him of the end
To this wild labyrinth. But the flickering ray
Created shadows which the more perplexed
His anxious eye ; and sounds which seemed at first
To come from some well-trodden road, where men
Were hastening forward on their trampling steeds,
And heavy wanes were groaning 'neath the wealth
Of over-laden barns or warehouses,

Borne to the neighbouring city,—soon these sounds
 Were changed into a sad and hollow moan
 Which nearer and still nearer came, and then
 Was lost in utter silence. Woe to him,
 Who thus in lone perplexity attempts
 To find his way beyond the forest's gloom,
 When every path that opens to his view
 Still leads him farther from the one he seeks.

But look again. Upon yon rocky strand,
 A various multitude, in scattered groups,
 Watches the ebbing tide. Full many a time
 The moon has filled her horn, since some of those
 Adventurous travellers first reached that shore.
 There were among them those who little thought
 To find the surges of the fathomless sea
 Barring their course: some, more hopeful, looked
 For friendly keels that soon with favoring winds
 Would waft them o'er the waves: others there were
 Of bold eccentric minds, who fondly deemed
 That in due time some power within their hearts,
 Some mighty influence, would unfold itself,
 And bear them upwards, and then far away
 Over the ocean to whatever clime

Might best their fancy suit. But vain the hope
 They lingered there, all in their several ranks,
 From spring to autumn, and till winter flung
 His sheeted storms upon the furious sea.
 And spring returned, and summer, and again
 Autumn and winter, steward and spoiler they,
 Performed their course. But still those multitudes
 Found neither bark to bear them o'er the waves,
 Nor power to chain the flood, nor wit to span
 With bridge ærial the mysterious depth.

And many there grew old ; their haggard looks
 Betokening well that hope, which once had lent
 Vigour to thought, had vanished. Of the rest,
 Some ceased to gaze upon the waves, and strove
 Quite to forget that they had ever looked
 To find a home beyond them. Others watched,
 With passionate and never-tiring gaze
 The meteors which, ever and anon,
 Like angels on the wing, passed down the sky,
 And seemed to cleave the pure, blue adamant,
 That human eyes might see the world beyond.

Various the speech and tone which there prevailed.
 Hope and despair, and hateful discontent :

And the strange fury of intemperate joy,
 Reason, and passion, stern philosophy,
 And wise humility, confessing now
 That vain it were to think that line to pass
 While man himself remained what then he was.
 Each gave his counsel: each proclaimed his will:
 But still the gulf unfathomable rolled
 Its gloomy waves unbroken to the strand.

And such as that lone wanderer in the woods,
 Or some of those who by the darksome main
 Sat wondering and perplexed that there their course
 Must hopeless end: such was each traveller
 Through life's lone wilderness; and such the mass,
 The vexed and weary multitude, ere Thou
 Blessed Jesus! didst in thine own self become
 The way to happier worlds; and by thy word,
 And acts heroic, and triumphant death,
 Didst throw such living light upon the path
 Which leads to heaven, that not a soul can err,
 Nor feeblest heart despair, that looks to Thee,
 The way Thyself; but guide and leader too.

To reach the realm where truth and goodness reign,
 Man must pursue the path whereon his heart

Grows wiser by the travail and the toil.
 Nor this alone. 'Tis not the patient step,
 The mere desire to win the distant goal,
 Will give him that for which his bosom pants.
 He must have strength of soul, virtue sublime;
 And courage to engage in fight with him
 Whose malice tries and tests the power of good.

And thus it was with Him, greatest and best
 Of all the sons of men; with Him who first
 Dared with effectual step, and armed right hand
 To win a path-way through the darksome world,
 And all its turbulent hosts, to that fair home,
 Whither He fain would all his brethren lead.
 Stern poverty, and solitary thought
 Had been the teachers of his youth: from them
 His heart had learnt to dissipate all dreams
 Of wayward fancy; and to find in truth
 More exquisite beauty, food for sympathies
 Of such ecstatic sweetness and delight,
 That tried with them the most impassioned love,
 Inflamed and fed by earthly impulses,
 Is as an accidental harmony
 Breath'd by the vagrant air, compared with that

Which some great master, in serenest mood,
 Draws from the willing lyre. Nor deem that He,
 Who thus with soul sublime soared far above
 The base and poisonous vapours of the earth,
 Despised the lovely paths where nature smiles,
 And teaches as a mother. From her breath,
 Vital in hills and woods, and wheresoe'er
 Light, air, and sounds significant proclaim
 That there is work in hand about the earth;—
 From her pure teaching had he learnt the lore
 Which she alone bestows; and thence His heart
 Was stored with deep experiences and thoughts,
 Which waited as etherial prototypes
 For things which the great future should bring forth.

Thus tutored, and yet better taught to love
 By all the graces which can wait on home;
 And wiser still to reason from the light,
 Which mingling with that love now clearer fell
 Upon his path, Jesus, matured in soul,
 Prepared to seek those scenes where well he knew
 The bitterest foe of all the human race
 Would meet him on his way. And were there not
 In that fond heart—of mould so exquisite,

That of the myriad feelings which belong
 To the great orb of pure humanity
 Not one was wanting there—O! were there not
 In that fond heart of his, a sorrow now,
 Such as it ne'er had known, till, as he turned
 From the low porch where his lov'd mother stood
 Weeping, he bade adieu to all that e'er
 Could bear for Him on earth the name of home?

On Jordan's banks, where the bright river flowed
 With more than wonted clearness, and outspread
 Into a broad translucent pool, there stood
 A sad and anxious multitude. On some
 Care and distress; on others fierce remorse
 Had fixed the signs indelible of woe.
 A voice was heard among them; deep, yet keen
 And piercing; like the murmur of a storm
 Careering o'er the wilderness when night
 Seems striving to shake off its ponderous gloom.
 That voice made spirits tremble which had dared
 To trample on all laws, and fiercely mock
 What early sage, or prouder scribe had taught.
 And hearts there were to whom its sounds became,

Though terrible, stern harbingers of hope ;
 While others, first awakened to a sense
 Of inner life, with strange amaze looked on,
 As if new worlds were dawning on their sight.

That multitude was roused, but knew not yet
 The way to peace or freedom. With a look
 Of tenderness, so holy, and so deep,
 That it turned awe to love, Jesus upraised
 His eyes to heaven, and hand in hand with him,
 That mighty preacher, passed the shelving bank
 And bowed his meek head to the trembling flood.
 Then first the heaven of heavens responses gave
 To that strong voice of pure humanity,
 Which, thenceforth consecrate to noblest aims,
 Should win a kingdom back for God and Man.
 Spirit supreme ! how blessed the hour when Thou
 Didst plume Thy power with love, and give to truth
 The radiant form in which with silver wings,
 And its dove's eyes, it best could find its way
 To softest bosoms, and lie cherished there
 Till it should rise again, and bear with it
 The nectared sweets which even truth can win
 From gentle hearts.

Over the wondering crowd
Awhile there hung a broad and luminous cloud,
And the air seemed to hold in its embrace
All forms and powers of beauty that would fain
Have sought the earth, but that the rightful time
Was not yet fully come. And while entranced
In the amazement of that solemn hour,
Words of profoundest import swept along,
And taught the multitude that He on whom
Their eyes were fixed with such enraptured awe,
Was God's dear Son, but sent for them to be
A willing and a bleeding sacrifice.

With looks of love ineffable, but swift,
As urged by some deep impulse, Jesus passed
Through the admiring throng, and soon was lost
In the thick shadows of declining day.

What is it which deforms the soul, and bows
The lofty spirit of immortal man
To the base clod on which he treads? What mars
The generous sentiment, the earnest wish,
And aspirations pointing to the height
Where virtue, truth, and fortitude abide?

What thus defaces and disarms the soul?
 Stripping it of its glory, till it lie
 Like some unhappy priest, who chained, and bare
 Of all his ornaments, has grovelling fall'n
 Upon the steps which should have seen him pass
 To the high altar and mysterious rites?
 O what is it which has such mischief wrought
 In our humanity, but unbridled sense;
 Passion and appetite, whose fierce demands
 Compel the soul to barter at their call
 Its freedom for the basest of delights?

Well knew that mightiest of conquerors,
 Who had stood face to face with armies ranged
 Under the proudest banners, that he need
 But spread some dainty couch, or dress the board
 With luscious banquets, to make patriots false,
 And warriors faithless to their noblest trust,
 If warriors or patriots be they,
 Whose call, or whose pretence, it is to win
 For fallen man, a freer, happier state.
 And well He knew, that first of all the race
 Who rightly dare that enemy defy,
 How powerless must all arts, all weapons prove

Against the antagonists of man till man
Himself again become what man should be.

Hence in his own rejoicing consciousness
Of fitness for the task, and forward urged
By the omnipotent spirit which within
His soul deep-seated reigned ; Jesus went forth
Prepared for bitter need, for patient toil,
For bold determined conflict, or whate'er
Might best avail to crush the subtle foe
Whom now He waited on his darksome path.

To them whose aim it is to reach the height
Where noble souls in sweet communion dwell,
The solemn wilds of solitude are as
A stern, majestic entrance to the halls
Of some great potentate, which lie beyond
Intricate passages and corridors,
And vaulted galleries, and chambers filled
With treasures which seem only gathered there
To dazzle and perplex unpractised eyes.
And thus to Jesus was the wilderness.
Howling and waste, its rugged tracts display'd
Such desolation, that along its path

Nature herself look'd homeless. But to Him
 The unindulgent plain ; the hills abrupt,
 Cleft by the lightnings which had graven them
 With records of old storms ; the silent pools,
 Where fancy might have thought that gloomy night
 Had lost her ebon offspring,—these to Him
 Were not unwelcome, for his mind could rest
 In happiest repose when nought appeared
 Unlike its stern resolve.

Long time in vain,
 Had the base tempter sought by subtlest art
 To turn aside his foe. Day after day,
 And in the dreamy watches of the night,
 He hung about Him as the poisonous south
 Weaves an invisible net work of disease,
 Of plague, and death, about the drooping head
 Of the poor traveller in Indian wilds.
 But frustrate all his arts. The healthful soul
 Flung from itself the hated pestilence,
 As vase of purest chrystal, though it be
 Thin as the lightest gossamer, can bear
 Uninjured the fierce strokes and deadly aim
 Of the enraged adder's forked tongue

And finding thus his travail lost, the foe
 Gave up the siege, watching till time might bring
 The patient wanderer more within the grasp
 Of common wants and wishes. And at length,
 The haggard look ; the weak and tottering step,
 Long sleep and fitful waking, and the sigh
 Which burst unwilling from the labouring breast,
 Betrayed the fainting frame : a signal this
 For Satan to approach by other ways,
 Than those which lead more darkly to the soul.
 Nor did he lack encouragement to hope
 That, though his subtler stratagems had failed,
 A bolder warfare might secure the prize ;
 For often had he found that those who boast
 A nature so refined, that it rejects
 With ready instinct whatso'er intrudes
 Upon the silent empire of its thoughts,
 Will not unfrequent yield where earthly sense,
 Sudden conceit of fancy or of pride,
 Are put in motion by such stimulant
 As reaches not the finer powers of mind.

To spirits in their intercourse with man,
 Particular purpose gives substantial form,

Clothing their purer essence in such garb
 As best befits their errand and their aim.
 Hence when keen hunger opened every sense
 To outward things, and Jesus felt how sweet
 Had been that meal, which His dear mother's hand
 Was wont to spread upon the frugal board,
 Satan appeared ; his aspect and his words,
 Not startling, but familiar, for in minds
 Even the purest, it is ever so,
 That appetite betrays the tempter near,
 And shapes his image with exactest art.
 His phrase was subtly fitted to the mood
 Of Him to whom he spake : for lofty souls,
 When sorely pressed by need, will fondly seek
 To hide the grosser part of appetite
 By means they take to still it. Hence the foe
 Bade Jesus test the power which in him lay,
 And force from nature in her harshest guise,
 Tribute to intellectual sovereignty.

The victory was twofold : appetite
 Lay chained by holy thought ; and pride abashed,
 Owned that its boasted empire o'er the mind
 Was all dissolved by one pure word of truth.

But ceased not then the struggle. Somewhat changed
 In form, and with a look which well became
 The haughtiness of Him who claims to be
 Monarch of monarchs, Satan raised his hand,
 And beckoning, as on some great end intent,
 Led Jesus up a solitary mount,
 From whose hoar summit could be seen the vast,
 The vague, but not unpeopled depths of space.
 Forgetting not of late defeat to take
 Ready advantage—grave and pithy words
 Fell from the tempter's lips, and well he praised
 The sterner virtues as fit ornament
 For those who would be kings ; then with a smile
 Benign and solemn, spoke he of the power
 Which he possessed o'er all the sons of men ;
 And skilfully did he pourtray the course
 Whereby he gained such right o'er human hearts.
 It was a tale which might full well have charmed
 All other ears but that on which it fell.
 The story ended ; undisguising aught
 Of his proud aim, he owned that he had need
 Of one among the numerous sons of men,
 Whose innate strength of soul, and courage rare
 Might fit him to control with sceptered hand

The fickle world. "Bow but to me," he said,
 "And such a diadem shall grace thy brow
 As never yet, the mightiest potentate
 On earth hath worn." As thus he spake, behold
 The whole horizon gleamed with ruddy light,
 And the wide pomp of empires rose to view.
 With sudden trembling seized, the mount itself
 Seemed to become a throne, raised far above
 All thrones that in the purple distance stood.
 Swift through the air a radiant meteor flew,
 And at the feet of Jesus, dazzling lay
 A golden sceptre, while above his head
 Invisible hands were weaving into shape
 A gorgeous crown, which ever and anon,
 Flashed in the dark thick air. Then voices rose,
 Preparing as it were, triumphal song ;
 And all around from countless instruments,
 Low mellow sounds were heard, strains indistinct,
 Best framed to charm an undetermined will
 From its last hold on conscience.

Vain the lures
 Of Satan and his ministers, when tried
 Against the heart which only throbbed to crush

Their tyrannous reign. With stern rebuke and scorn,
 Jesus repelled the tempter ; and again
 One word of pure and holy truth sufficed
 For victory. As Jesus spake, a cloud
 Of sulphurous gloom spread dark'ning o'er the scene:
 The savage mount resumed its wonted form ;
 And lustreless the cold horizon round,
 Marked but the dreary limits of the waste.

With hasty step, as one who challenges
 His foe to fresh encounter, Satan led
 Jesus across the wilderness. The path
 Was long and rough, but ere the morning watch
 Had woke the sacrificing priest, they stood
 Upon the Temple's battlements. Thence they viewed
 The slumbering city, lying now so still,
 That they who had not known its history,
 Might well have deemed it was the bless'd abode
 Of holiest peace. In outline sharp and clear,
 Mountain and precipice, and long winding vales,
 Each with its store of monumental wealth,
 Lay stretched before them. From the pinnacle,
 On whose projecting, narrow base they stood,

The depth beneath was as some monstrous form,
 Which had such strange enchantment in its look,
 That few could meet its glance, nor feel disposed
 To leap to its embrace. The tempter marked,
 With subtle glance, how o'er the pensive brow
 Of Jesus, worn with fast and weariness,
 Dark shadows passed, betokening that within
 The labouring brain vexed thought was hardly tasked
 To do its perfect work. Then with such words,
 As might have flattered weaker souls to try
 Unopened and forbidden paths to rest,
 He bent his gaze upon the shadowy void,
 And half suspended o'er the dizzy edge
 Of the smooth battlement, bade Jesus dare
 What ancient promise taught the sons of God
 Might well approve their faith in his decrees.
 But in pure hearts faith needs no other test,
 Than that serene and happy confidence,
 In the sufficiency of that which is,
 No less for man's than God's own purposes.
 Enough the present trial well sustained,—
 The peril or the sorrow of the hour,—
 To shew the trust which when a darker comes
 Shall claim the higher ministry of heaven.

So Jesus taught, as with the calm resolve
 Of holy wisdom, He again proclaimed
 God's will omnipotent. The words He spake
 Dismayed the tempter, and as some huge tower,
 Or ocean-beacon, struck by lightning, rolls
 A mass of black confusion to the deep,
 So rushed he from the battlement, and passed
 Hid in thick gloom along the vale beneath.

Now brightly shone the morn, and the pure air
 Breathed freshly, as if night had left with it
 Its coolness, but so tempered with the sweets
 Of opening day, that rivers, woods and meads,
 Seemed to have treasured all the season's life
 To quicken that bright hour. Entranced awhile
 In the glad sense of freedom, Jesus stood,
 And saw rejoicing that no trace was left
 Of the base tempter's presence: beautiful
 As something just created by the hand
 Of plastic art, a virgin marble shrine,
 Swelled into form the temple's ample round;
 As the soft moon in summer nights, when first
 She grows into a substance from the thin
 And lustrous aether. O'er the wide extent

Of earth and sky reigned visible content,
 Harmonious peace and joy. Nor long alone
 Did Jesus meditate. Around Him came
 Angelic ministers. With reverent love
 Strengthening his feeble steps, they bore him down
 The tortuous galleries, till at length he stood
 Where priests and people joined in early prayer.

Triumphant thus o'er him whose guile is power
 Of subtlest kind, the way which Jesus trod,
 With sure and stedfast look, was that which leads
 Direct to heaven; and he who follows Him,
 Gains at each step he sets, new strength of heart;
 Becomes a better and a nobler man:
 Learns what it is to suffer, and yet be
 Greatly content; to bind in closest bonds
 Passion and appetite, yet leave nature free
 To all her grand expansions; and to drink
 Deep draughts of life from every stream whose source
 Proclaims the current pure.

But small as yet,
 The part though arduous, which that guide hath traced
 Of his predestined way. A darksome length

Of toil and trial still before Him lies ;
 And should He leave the breadth of but a line
 Of that rough path untrodden, there would rise
 Foes of such monstrous shape, walls of such height,
 To bar the way, that never man again,
 Whate'er his will, would dare attempt the path.

Brief rest enjoyed, such rest as travellers take,
 Who, though still far from home, have travelled well,
 Or such as he who falls asleep when night
 Closes upon his work just where 'tis best
 His hand should pause : such transient rest enjoyed,
 Jesus again went forth. Wisdom and love
 His steps directed, and as on He passed,
 The thoughts of scenes familiar to his youth
 Were to his heart like music. Distant far
 The hills of Galilee, and populous vales
 Of Nephthalim and Zabulon : but around,
 And o'er that land, as pictured to his eye,
 Thick darkness hovered, and the people sat
 Involved in rayless gloom. That gloom to pierce
 With heavenly light was now the Saviour's aim.
 Nor did He shun the wilderness where erst
 Such terrors had beset Him. Through it ran

A rough and narrow path which quickest led
 Those who dare tempt its horrors, on their way
 Towards Samaria. And Jesus sped
 With brow unclouded and serenest soul
 Along the waste. Low winds and sullen fiends
 Murmured around Him, and the murky clouds,
 Which should have kept the middle air, came down
 Covering the dwarfish hills and stunted trees
 With wet, unwholesome night. But little cared
 That lonely traveller for aught beside
 The thoughts and visions which possessed his soul.
 Steadfast in purpose, tranquilly He passed
 Through that dim region, till at length, beyond
 The Quarantanian rocks, a glorious breadth,
 And bright variety of landscape burst
 Full on his view. Along the golden track
 Of autumn's richest sojourn basking lay
 All forms of plenty. Ripened corn fields met
 Bright vineyards, which from low-browed mountains sloped
 Down to the plain: while, here and there, the line
 Of sunny beauty from its course was turned
 By ancient clive groves, and orchards dark
 With intermingling branches of the palm,
 Pomegranate, fig, and mulberry, through which

Glimmered the yellow orange.

Far away,

But still distinct against the evening sky,
Rose the tall peaks of Gilead's balmy mount :
Nor unobserved by Him, who knew so well
With patriot soul the annals of his land
To meditate, the old historic heights
Of fall'n Tekoa, or, of grander note,
Bethel and Shiloh, mid continuous hills
Shrouding the favoured haunts of ancient seers.

Beneath a group of oaks and sycamores,
Skirting a narrow glen through which there flowed
A mountain rivulet, the traveller sought
Such couch as the green sward, and flowers, and moss,
Might best afford. Not numerous in that land
The tuneful choristers of woods and fields,
But oft in far removed and favoured spots,
The nightingale and plaintive cushat dove,
Will all night long melodious watches keep.
And these they kept while round about the grove
Unseen, unheard, angelic squadrons passed,
Guarding the happy slumberer's sweet repose.

END OF BOOK SECOND.

F

BOOK III.

ARGUMENT.

Jesus pursues his journey : Circumstances described which it may be imagined happened on the way, and which may have formed the foundation of Parables, &c. The Good Samaritan : Samaria. The Marriage and the ten Virgins. Jesus supposed to pass by the house of the rich man whose fields brought forth abundantly. The Returning Prodigal. Nazareth. Jesus and his Mother. His Miracle at Cana. Preaching at Nazareth. Departure thence.

Book the Third.



To sleep, and dream such dreams as Jesus dreamt ;
To share such thoughts as waking filled his heart,—
Who would not bear the hardest toil which day,
Duty, or earnest conscience can impose ?
Scarce had the sun his dewy splendours shed
O'er Hermon's loftiest peak, when gladsomely
Jesus arose, and tracked his onward path,
As one who just hath heard some voice beloved
Give precious promises of coming joy,
And which so rouse his heart, his limbs so nerve,
That as he moves, he seems to bear with him
A key that may unlock for him and his
The gate of paradise.

But ere the dawn
 Had chased away the dewy shades of night,
 From winding vale and rocky mountain pass,
 Hard by the craggy steep which opens down
 Upon the road to Jericho, behold,
 The traveller pauses ; for his ear hath caught
 The sound of voices, feeble but clear, and like
 Slow dropping waters where dull silence reigns.
 A few more steps have brought Him to the spot,
 Where one, whose garb bespeaks him of the race
 Which dwells in hated Sychem, tends a man
 Whose wounds, inflicted by a robber band,
 He binds with gentlest care, while cheering words
 Fall from his lips, as if a brother spoke
 To heal a brother's grief. The tale soon told,
 Jesus beheld the stranger with a look
 Which shot delight and gladness through his heart.
 Sweet benediction ! but more precious still
 The record written on the Saviour's soul,
 Whence the great charter binding man to man
 By rights more powerful than names or laws.

 Day after day, by inward power upheld,
 Nor undelighted by the varied grace,

The charm of incident and circumstance,
 Which marked his course, Jesus pursued the path
 Which led direct beneath the solemn heights
 Of Ebal and Gerizim. Short the way
 From that deep vale, o'er which in ancient times
 Were interchanged the blessing and the curse
 Of laws fulfilled or broken, to the hill
 Crowned by Samaria's towers and palaces.
 Gay as a bride, the beauteous mount display'd
 Gardens, and marble terraces that gleamed
 Through myrtle shades, like lines of drifted snow ;
 And bowers of gold and ivory, overhung
 With veils of gorgeous purple ; while above
 The gentler slopes majestically rose
 Temples of varied form, turrets and domes,
 The pomp of faiths corrupted or decayed.

When darkness fell, from bowers and gardens streamed
 The lustrous light of silver lamps, which told
 Of festive throngs and sumptuous bridal rites.
 And many a note of joy and revelry,
 Sounds that lie softest on the midnight air,
 Came floating from the city. Then awhile
 Deep stillness reigned, till on a sudden rose

A quick impatient cry, and hastening forth
 From a fair garden-house, a throng of girls
 Took in their eager hands the glimmering lamps
 Which, while they sought brief slumber, they had left,
 Upon the flowery lawn. Some quickly fed
 And soon restored the half-expiring flame :
 But others darkling went ; and when the shout
 Of glad acclaim burst loudest on the ear,
 With plaintive sighs they sought the thickest shades,
 And wept their hot and unavailing tears
 O'er broken friendships, forfeited delights,
 And hopes that ever die in shallow hearts.

Scarce had the lofty towers and rich domains
 Of proud Samaria and its lords been pass'd,
 When fertile plains, deep woodlands, and such vales
 As promise to each season best return
 For favouring winds and showers, appeared in view.
 Then came a broad and open champaign tract,
 With pleasant rural homes ; and soon the stir
 Of prosperous country life and labour fill'd
 The heart of Jesus with a grateful thought
 Of that which man may be and have, where heaven
 Sheds its free blessing on his honest toils.

Among the rest a larger homestead rose,
 Conspicuous by its long, white garden walls,
 Laden with fruit : around were numerous barns,
 Large but o'er-stocked ; rich Autumn at the door
 Waiting like some poor huckster with his wares
 Asking a home. Beyond were grassy slopes,
 With bordering willows ; while, as if to tell
 The hours and seasons, clumps of aged oaks
 Broke the green sun-light where the pasture spread
 Most open to the day. There milk-white herds,
 And numerous flocks on which the shepherds looked
 Content and proud, betokened well that he
 Who owned the fields which thus the Lord had blessed,
 Had need but of a tranquil, thankful soul,
 To be right happy.

So it chanced that he,
 The master of that rustic lordship, stray'd,
 As Jesus passed, beside a purling stream,
 And sunk in worldly reverie proclaimed
 The vain ambition of his pampered heart.
 No shadow crossed his path : nor could the ear,
 Of fancy in its most oracular mood,
 Listening for warnings, have detected aught
 Adverse to that he hoped : but as he stood,

Pausing a moment, o'er his brow there fell
 A heavy darkness. Jesus looked, and knew
 That even then the light of life was gone.

Weary, and not without some saddening thought,
 He journeyed on; and when the sultry noon
 Shed pitiless splendour round Him, gladly turned
 To where an ancient Terebinth o'erhung
 The traveller's path, and with its tremulous boughs,
 And pendent blossoms, whispered to repose.
 Not long had Jesus rested there, and felt
 The sweet return of those bright images
 Which for awhile had vanished, when behold!
 A poor and haggard wanderer approached.
 Piteous his plight; his trembling limbs so faint
 That scarcely had he sought some sign to give
 Of friendly greeting, when he prostrate lay
 Swooning upon the earth. With patient care,
 Jesus applied such aid as kindly thought,
 And his light scrip could give: nor was it long
 Ere the poor stranger breathed his thanks, and told
 How long his journey, and what bitter griefs
 Preyed on his heart. He spoke of early days:
 Of a dear father's love abused, and lost,

He feared, for ever. Many tears he shed,
 And then related how a sudden light
 Had broken on the darkness of his soul;
 And what an awful sense of guilt and dread
 Had bowed him to despair, till wond'rously
 That ray of hope had reached him where he lay
 Deep sunk in vice and wretchedness. And then,
 He told how, thus aroused by what appeared
 Sweet intimation of the will of heaven,
 He rose with throbbing heart, and straight resolved
 To seek again his long-forsaken home.

Thus speaking, o'er his face the pallid hue
 Of suffering spread, and with a sigh that spoke
 Intensest agony, he said that now
 Hunger and pain and fasting had destroyed
 The hope which hitherto had borne him on
 His lone and weary way.

Jesus beheld

The fainting wanderer with looks which shewed,
 That well He understood what he had said,
 And what he thought to say, but did not speak.
 Strange power there was in that benign regard:

The lonely outcast felt that whatsoe'er
Might now betide him, there was one at least
Who knew the force of penitence like his.

By this the sun was on his downward course ;
And the cool breeze and lengthning shadows taught
That travellers who, ere nightfall, hoped to sit
Among their kindred, must not long delay.
Few words revealed what harrowing doubts oppress'd
The stranger's heart ; and how their power increased
The nearer he approached the home he sought.
Nor did he fail to tell that fears which thus
Held back his steps, would vanish, if that He,
Whom thus by happy providence he met,
Would keep beside him on his anxious way.
At once the ready hand of Jesus raised
The still half-fainting wanderer ; and intent
Upon the hope which he himself inspired,
Pointed across the far extending plains,
To where the richest hour of closing day
Lay satiate with light. Beneath that light,
Softened with tender shadowings, rose to view
A stately mansion : round about it stretched
Thick groves and princely lawns, and, seen afar,

A broad cascade its gleaming waters flung
 Athwart the sylvan vista. Thitherward
 The travellers bent their steps; earnest discourse
 Strengthening the heart of him whose pallid face
 Betokened inward conflicts, such as few
 Would willingly endure for all that sin
 Can give or promise. More than once he paused,
 As doubting whether to lie down, and let
 Despair o'erpower him, and so end the fray;
 Or by a patient suffering to subdue
 The worst part of his agony.

While thus,

Conflicting thoughts had well nigh marr'd the hope
 Which first inspired him, precious were the words
 Which Jesus spake. A something more than hope;—
 Feelings which had a birth, a higher life,
 Than all which hitherto the mind had known,
 Bore him along, and shed around his path
 A light so softly radiant that he felt
 He could not now be far from home and rest.

Prophetic was the feeling: from the brow
 Of a green hill which overlooked the plain,
 An aged man had watched with anxious eye

The weary travellers : as they nearer drew,
 A sudden pang shot through his heart, the pang
 Of infant hope, dying as soon as born.
 Again he looked : the strangers onward came :
 A prayer, a blessing only half expressed,
 Burst from his bosom ; and as one whose joy
 Has blinded him, and quite bewildered thought,
 He stood with outstretched arms, nor moved till when
 His trance was broken by a piercing cry,
 And his lost son lay weeping in his arms.
 And Jesus wept : and o'er his tender soul
 Oft did that scene in sweet remembrance pass,
 When heaven's poor outcasts met him on the way,
 And told their griefs, and to his counsel gave
 The heed of faithful penitence.

When next

The shades of evening fell, before Him lay
 The vale of Nazareth. Subdued were now
 All common hopes, affections and desires,
 To one sublime resolve : but still they lived
 Deep in the heart, and as consenting thoughts
 Of humble minds diminish not the power
 Of argument or eloquence, the birth

Of loftiest intellects, so injured not
 The Nazarene's fond thought of early days,
 Those solemn visions which possessed his soul,
 And bore it as upon a fiery car
 Along its awful track. Again He stood
 Beside his mother. Widowed now, and worn
 With lonely meditation, she had watched
 Night after night the heavens in their course ;
 Thought of the power which ruled them as of that
 Which still would guide the footsteps of her son ;
 And heard in those calm voices of the past,
 Which speak to holy memories, what would be
 His fate on earth. But just as thought had reached
 That point at which a mother's heart can bear
 No more the weight of its own prophecies,
 Jesus before her stood. Oh happy hour !
 How swiftly fled the clouds which seemed to hang
 Over his path : how bright, how radiantly,
 Shone forth the star to her enraptured soul
 Which she had seen in Bethlehem ! while again
 Rose the sweet melodies which filled the air
 Upon that night of wonders, when she first
 Prest to her virgin heart the incarnate God !
 As now He stood before her, not a trace

Of woe or care appeared upon his brow.
 To her delighted gaze He looked a king
 Just crowned : upon his lips there seemed to hang
 The words that would decide the fate of worlds ;
 While in his eye that lustre beamed which told,
 How that within his soul a spirit lived
 Great in its self-command, and given to be
 Mightiest among the powers that govern men,
 Or rule the spheres.

Perchance, in that fond hour

Of happiest communion, love unlocked
 The wells of glory, hid within the bounds
 Of human attributes, and thus allowed
 The light of Deity to pass beyond
 The limits of the spirit where it glowed
 In depths unfathomable : even as when,
 On Tabor's mount, a rapt devotion fanned
 The veil aside behind whose living folds
 Divinity reposed.

But few the days

Of that sweet rest which, like a Sabbath's calm,
 Blessed the lone home of Mary and her Son.
 Strange rumours, and surmisings stranger still,

Had raised a host of ready disputants,
 Anxious to try their strength with one who seemed
 Worthy of rivalry. And some there were
 Who felt already that his words would be
 Like wormwood to their souls; while others wept
 In secret, over sins till now unmarked
 By sign or thought of penitence.

And see!

With aspect meek the expected prophet comes,
 His friendly greeting and sedate discourse
 Winning from all attentive audience,—
 From some a nobler tribute, fervent hearts,
 Ready at once to bear whatever love
 To such a master might impose.

As yet,

No throng of trembling sufferers sought his aid;
 The mournful leper passed unheeding by:
 The blind, the dumb, the palsy-stricken knew
 That He was great and wise; the maimed and halt
 Thought that He looked as one whose hand might stay
 The feeblest steps; but none could trace discern
 Of the Almighty power which dwelt within

The movements of his will. Demoniacs scowled
 With darker terror as they crossed his path,
 And uttered words which in their madness seemed
 Filled with a strange intelligence. Dismay,
 And all the varied passions of the soul,
 By turns assailed the crowd; and day by day,
 They gathered round Him still intent to hear
 What hearing they had wished unheard, or heard
 In happier times, and ere they felt as now
 Rebels to truth and love.

Rare now the hour

For that sweet converse which the mother sought
 In their own quiet home, when as He spake
 Her heart grew stronger to repel the fears
 Which burdened it. But once she led Him forth
 Along the vale, and over dewy meads,
 To where, embosomed, mid its pastoral hills,
 Cana lay smiling 'neath the evening sun.
 There was a pleasant murmur in the air,
 Glad voices blending with such simple strains
 As village minstrels by tradition learn
 To fill with happiest meaning. Garlands hung
 From every roof; and every face was glad

As if it was some common cause of joy
 Which made that day a day of festival.
 With gladsome step, and tender smiles that gave
 New beauty to her melancholy brow,
 The virgin brought her son, a guest beloved,
 To bless the home of some whom she had known
 In early youth, and still delighted owned
 As bound to her by friendship's dearest ties.
 Soon felt the revellers the genial charm
 Of that blest presence. Like some harp or flute,
 Adding an under-current of rich notes
 To blended voices, not expecting aid,
 Fell the sweet words of Jesus on the ear
 Of many a happy listener. Deep delight
 Filled every heart, but chiefly her's who saw
 That He whose lot she knew it was to bear
 The banner of a conqueror up to Heaven,
 Loved thus to consecrate domestic joy,
 And social sympathies, and nuptial hopes,
 With fresher life ; and from the hidden stores
 Of his unfathomed wisdom to diffuse
 Such priceless pearls among the young and fair
 As might have rendered them, though poor in wealth,
 Fit match for kings.

Then love gave birth to faith :

Nought now could Mary doubt. She saw her son,
 Endowed with power so wondrous and benign,
 That whatsoe'er, or friendly wish, or need,
 Had prompted her to seek, she had not feared
 To ask it of Him. Soon occasion rose
 To test that fond assurance. Empty stood
 The silver wine cups, and no store remained,
 Wherewith to crown again th' half-finished feast.
 A whisper told what Mary felt and hoped :
 But ah ! she knew not what a cord she struck
 In that fond heart of Jesus, when she called
 Forth from its depths that power which, while it slept,
 Left Him for some brief hours to bless her sight
 With his dear presence ; but which when summoned
 To its high task must bear him forth as one
 Who had no home, no kin for which He dare
 His steps delay, or to their kindly voice
 Give ear a moment.

Tender, but yet sad,
 The look with which He half reproved the call
 Which thus aroused before its needed time
 The wonder-working spirit. But it woke,

And lo ! the tasteless water, as a thing
 Thirsty itself, drank in the glowing life
 Of a new essence. Elemental joy,
 Baptized delight, regenerate influences,
 Belonging at the first to simplest forms
 Of nature and existence, gave their hue,
 Their tone and savour, to the limpid wealth
 Which Jesus blessed. And thenceforth was it known,
 That whatsoe'er, in all the common round
 Of earthly life, might feel the present grace
 Of that great Lord of nature renovate,
 Should bring delight, however tame itself,
 Solace and strength, to every faithful heart.

Scarce had the morrow's sun fulfilled its course,
 When far around the busy voice of fame
 Had roused the startled multitude, and brought
 From towns remote and by-way villages,
 Admiring throngs, intent to see and hear
 That wonder-working prophet who had risen
 In times so dark and spiritless. They came
 As those who see far off some glimmering light,
 Making the shadows of great things visible,
 And mingling vast realities with forms

Of ill-defining but enquiring night.
 They came and heard his words; and they who saw
 The miracle at Cana, and had hoped
 To see, perchance, again such signs displayed
 Of power prophetic, now forgot that wish,
 As thought substantial, thought creative filled
 Their souls with fresher life. Familiarly
 He spake; but never words before had been
 Pregnant with such a life. Men's souls awoke
 To feel there was a mightier power in words,
 Than ever fancy yet had dreamed there dwelt
 In nature's noblest messengers. They saw,
 As forth He launched the lightning of his scorn,
 Avenging angels rising to confound
 The base and cowering hypocrite: they heard
 The countless harps of heaven consenting touched
 To each great thought He uttered. Like the sound
 Of rushing torrents, fell his stern rebukes
 On souls that hitherto had darkly slept
 'Twixt sin and death. To others as He spake
 The heavens shed out new light: new stars appeared:
 And cruel destinies, which men had traced
 In signs malignant, passed away like ghosts
 That feared the dawn. Now first the bondsman knew

That thought in him was free as in his lord,
 And to as high a purpose. Women looked
 Perplexed with awful thankfulness: their hearts
 Beat with new pulses: they might love and be
 Diviner by their love: might give to one
 Their passionate sacrifice of sighs and tears,
 And yet possess his soul, and lead him on,
 A willing captive, in dependance sweet
 Upon their prayers and counsels, up to heaven.

Thus at his word aroused, the startled crowd
 But looked to see Him raise his hand to rush
 In blind obedience to his will, and do
 Whatever task He set them.

Vain their thought!

No wish had He for homage such as theirs,
 Who in their wild devotion, all-unstaid
 By the true loyalty of faith or love,
 Had owned Him for their King, and urged Him forth
 To claim the throne of Cæsar. But not thus
 Deemed those of Jesus whose awakened hearts
 Felt the full power of his diviner aim.
 They knew Him, though not yet as to be known,

As one whom heaven had sent to bless mankind,—
 To save the lost; the falling to uphold;
 To guide the erring, and on all to pour
 The dew of such sweet blessing as might keep
 Their hearts from breaking. And as such they loved
 To catch the slightest whisper of his lips;
 To guard his steps, to own Him as their Lord,
 Their friend and counsellor,—the Christ, to whom
 Prophets and patriarchs looked when light divine
 Spread its refulgent lustre o'er their dreams,
 And robed them in his righteousness.

But fears,
 Dark, mad'ning fears, such as possess the heart
 When pride defies the patient grace of heaven,
 Converted others into deadly foes
 Of Jesus and his word. In vain He spake
 Of mercy and of hope: of that pure bliss
 Which penitent spirits know, when first they feel
 What 'tis to pass from darkness into light,
 And bear again the image of their God.
 Alike in vain the clear and bold appeal
 To ancient writ; to laws confessed of all—
 Founded on right eternal; to decrees,

Records, and types, and prophecies. In vain
 From the vast vault of ages, from the depths
 Where hoary wisdom dwells amid her sons,
 Rose to the scoffer's soul the spectral throng
 Of those who fought, and still desired to fight
 The battle of great truth.

More darkly fell

The shades of error on those phrenzied minds
 In whom it found acceptance. Fiercer grew
 Their wrath against the truth the more they saw
 What truth demanded. Each to each appealed
 Against the voice of conscience, and beheld
 The meek and lowly teacher as a foe
 More to be feared and hated than a band
 Of mightiest conquerors. Satan knew his time :
 And like a lamb for which contending wolves
 Blinded with hunger strive, went Jesus forth ;
 Urged by the foremost up the desolate heights
 Which overlook their city. But behold !
 A sudden darkness seizes on their eyes,
 And Jesus leaves the frantic throng behind.
 In vain they strive to trace his vanishing form
 Through the dense cloud, which seems to rise between

Them and their purposed victim. Furious shouts
 Ring loud from rock to rock. Some grope their way
 Along the valley : others doubting pause,
 Grasping the stunted pines, which haply tell
 Of chasms near ; while those whose rage will brook,
 Nor hindrance, nor delay, still upward press,
 Nor wait till light, fresh streaming o'er the hills,
 Shows where with step untroubled Jesus scales
 The topmost crags.

And now He stood where ceased
 The path-way ; and sheer down a thousand feet
 Would plunge the unhappy wanderer, who might reach
 That precipice when night, or storm and mist,
 Had fall'n around. But Jesus calmly traced
 The little wavy line of silvery light
 Drawn by a tiny brook that ran beneath
 The o'erhanging rocks : and as He watched the spray
 Of the bright rivulet, dripping from the leaves
 Of lillies and pale violets, onward came
 The fiercest of his foes. Among them were
 One whom He first had taught to feel himself
 A mere pretender to the worth he claimed :
 A common man, among the commonest

Of worldly men, but who had dared to look
 Those in the face whom better men beheld
 With modesty and fear, and were despised.
 Another was a man who just had gained
 Advantage o'er his rival by a fraud;
 And by his side there stood one who had left
 A banquet yesterday, because he feared
 To drink the cup which Jesus had foretold
 Would drown his soul in sin: but lo! to night
 Another feast awaited him; and he,
 So said his soul, must either leave unpledged
 The impure idols of the Bacchic hall,
 Or feel that he had trampled in the dust
 Their haughty enemy.

With hands outstretched,
 And curses deep, each bade the other seize
 The common foe; but terrors such as none
 Till now had known, their coward bosoms filled.
 Fixing their glazing eyes on the abyss,
 They stood like traitors whom the mighty arm
 Of justice pressed along the fatal path,
 And soon would fling, with all their weight of crime,
 Down to eternal night. Jesus beheld

Their altered forms with looks which told how well
He knew what fears oppressed them. Slowly then,
And not as one who deemed that enemies
Beset his path, He took his silent way,
And ere the moon had passed o'er half the vale,
He turned and bade adieu, with tearful eyes,
To poor, ungrateful Nazareth.

END OF BOOK THIRD.

BOOK IV.

ARGUMENT.

Jesus arrives at Capernaum. It is early dawn. His natural delight in the beauty of the scene. He preaches to the people. Mary Magdalene. Feeds the multitude on the mountain. Dismisses the people, and remains behind, passing the night in prayer. Storm on the Lake. Feast at Capernaum. Reports of Jesus. Jairus. Jesus leaves Capernaum. Solitude.

Book the Fourth.



Reposing 'mid its mountains lay the lake,
The inland sea, of old Gennesareth.
Around its marge and up the varied slopes
Of the green hills were towns and villages,
Each bearing token of well-boarded gains,
Won by the keel or plough. But stretching far
Along the western shore, Capernaum spread
Her prouder graces to the morning sun.
The dawn still hovered coyly on the heights,
Sending keen flashes from her beamy eye,
Which for the moment lit up all around
With rosy tints: the lake itself looked up
And met her glance with a familiar joy.
Then swept again the shadow of the night

Across the scene, and morn with maiden fear
 Of a dark world fell back upon the peaks,
 The snowy peaks of Libanus, which shone
 Beneath her purple-sandalled feet as shines
 The virgin gold which loves the furnace-flames,
 Kindled to make it purer. Struggling thus,
 The light with darkness fought for that fair scene,
 Which old tradition, and luxurious taste,
 Rabbis and Roman princes, courtezans,
 Merchants, and scribes, and all the sensual hordes
 That wait upon the prosperous, had proclaimed
 God's noblest work ; and that pellucid lake,
 Of all the seven seas which living flowed
 Forth at his call, the one on which his smile
 Most fondly dwelt.

And He whose steps we trace,
 Now stood upon a mountain's brow, from which
 That bright expanse of tranquil waters looked
 Like the blue heavens when seen through darkling clouds,
 Or narrow gorge of rocks, or vaulted roof
 Of bowering woods. No busy voice as yet
 Broke the sweet peace of dawn. The vinedresser,
 And early woodman, and the thrifty swain

Opening his guarded folds, pursued their toil
 As if they waited for the rising lark
 To give them liberty of speech. Beside
 The mossy margin of the lake were moored
 The fisher's bark and many a laden skiff;
 While here and there the rippling waters marked
 The track of some lone boat, whose pilot still
 Watched eagerly the net which all night long
 Had swept the waves in vain.

That silent scene,

With all its harmonies of light and shade,
 Those openings into heaven, and passages
 Through earthly life, seen in the images
 Which nature helps the morning to pourtray,
 Found in the mind of Jesus answering thoughts,
 Meanings, ideal forms,—that sense which makes
 Some hearts most loving of the past, and some
 Creative of the future, and the few,
 On whom the grace of heaven more largely flows,
 Masters of time in all its measurements,
 Known and unknown capacities of life.
 And happy they who feel what 'tis to be
 Scholars of such a master, and to share

The gifts of that same spirit which had taught
 His human soul to blend in fond delight
 With all that God has made for man to love.
 They taste that joy which they alone can know
 Who dare to let the trials and the griefs
 Of this our earthly course, be, for the hour,
 But as the shadows which are darkly cast
 From fairest things—from forms to which our hearts
 Cling with such rapture that we feel 'twere well
 To bear for them some sadness :—theirs that joy
 Which they alone can apprehend who know,
 That though the fountain of the purest love
 Lies hidden, even the very mist, that rolls
 Away before the sun-beam, helps to turn
 The vast machinery which shall bring to light
 Whatever has been framed for good.

And thus,

With happiest interchange of hopes sublime,
 And hallowed sympathies, looked Jesus forth
 Upon the living scene : but when again
 He watched the rising sun beside the marge
 Of that fair lake, 'twas not the quiet thought,
 The pleasant meditation of the heart,
 Combining nature's purpose with its own,

Which gave Him occupation : round him stood
 An ardent multitude whose eager souls
 Drank in his words, as fainting travellers
 The waters of a living fountain sought
 With patient toil, but only found at last
 By seeming accident. Rich men were there,
 And some of high renown ; soldiers and priests,
 And thoughtful artizans, with anxious looks
 Sharpened alike by poverty and scorn,
 And close keen reckonings with the callous world.

Day after day, at earliest dawn, and when
 The shades of evening fell, still flocked the crowd
 To hear the voice of Jesus. A new life
 Breathed in the air : the lake its waters poured
 With softer cadence on the shore ; a charm
 Like that of music, but with meaning in't,
 Of clear, intelligible love, prevailed,
 While with a power inscrutable He swayed
 The broad and mighty element in which
 Men's souls have life and passion.

And behold,

One, in whose dark and lustrous eyes there dwelt
 Intensest agony, before Him stood
 Imploringly : her hands upon her breast

Crossed with convulsive pressure, and her cheek
 Flushed with the blushes of a shame which gave
 A heightened but a piteous grace to charms
 More fit for heaven than earth. The multitude
 Shrunk from her touch ; and awe-struck silence reigned
 As Jesus raised his voice in stern command,
 And bade the seven spirits of ill, which dwelt
 In that convulsed but beauteous form, come forth.

A moan as of the dying wind ; and sobs
 Like the low sound of showers in the night,
 Moved the still air. Sharper and sharper grew
 The sound by distance, till a piercing cry
 Filled all the mountain echos, and betrayed
 The path of the fled demons down to hell.
 But lo ! her face irradiate with joy,
 Surprise and awe, and heavenly ecstacy,
 The Magdalene is kneeling at the feet
 Of her great champion : of women she
 The first to know what grace in Jesus dwells,
 What power to give to woman's heart its rights,
 Lost, marr'd, or forfeited : to win her back
 For heaven and love, though in the grasp of fiends,
 And crown her brows with amaranthine wreaths,
 Bright with the tears of angels.

As she knelt,

Praying in silence, many a throbbing heart
Felt that a blessing too had reached its core,
And healed its wounds. And others who were bowed
With dire infirmities, and subtle ills,
That had defied the keenest power of art,
Clasping the hand of Jesus found at once
The health and vigour of their youth return.
And often far away among the hills
The impatient multitude pursued his steps,
Till 'mid the solemn silence of the waste
His accents filled again their souls with joy,
And held them there enchained with such delight,
That earth and all its cares, and wanton shews,
Passed from their hearts, and left them free to learn
A truer life, and nobler services.
Blest were those hours, for then 'twas felt that man
Could find in words divine sustaining strength ;
And that, when over-wrought, the outward frame
May faint, none need be sad on whom the eye
Of heaven pitying looks. For now as sinks
The sun below the mountains, and the air,
Chill and disturbed, betokens that the night
Comes with no friendly aspect, Jesus warns

His hearers of the perilous path they tread
 Who seek their homes beside the lake when clouds
 And darkness are upon it. Then with looks,
 Like those which light a father's countenance,
 When at the happy evening meal he calls
 His children round him, lo ! the Saviour takes
 The scant supply which provident zeal hath found,
 And breaks the bread He blesses. And that bread
 Is like the fruit whose seed is in itself :
 It grows beneath the blessing : power supreme,
 Creative, as at first, again displays
 Its wonders in the word to which it binds
 The loftiest fates, and humblest wants of man.

The watches of the night are passing on ;
 But storms have found their home among the hills,
 Wooing the hours to riot which had else
 Slumbered and died. Alone, nor moved by aught
 But the pure ecstasies of thought and prayer,
 Jesus beholds the tempest's lurid wing
 Dipping its feathered lightning in the wave,
 While all around the solemn thunder peals,
 Like muffled bells from some huge church-tower built
 Above the clouds. At length He seeks the path

Which leads by shortest windings to the lake ;
 Nor waits He there, but with the step of one
 Who needs no staff, He treads the liquid plain,
 And mounts the broken ridges, or descends
 The watery precipice which the storm hath wrought,
 Like some bold traveller o'er the fearful track
 Of a volcano.

Far away he sees

The bark, which bears his few but faithful friends,
 Beating the adverse winds ; and as it strives,
 Thither He turns his steps, but they who look
 From the vexed ship upon the troubled main,
 Behold with fear unspeakable his form
 Shrouded in mist, now on the waves upheld,
 And now among them lost, as 'twere the play
 Of some strange phantom of the tempest born,
 And sent for dreadful purpose. But not long
 That fear remained : a lambent lustre hung
 About the brows of Jesus, and his voice,
 Heard through the storm, revived the faintest heart
 In the half-sinking bark. And one there was
 Whose love and zeal so glowed at that sweet sound
 That he must needs the perilous footing try

Of the wild waters. Wondrous was the power
 Which wrought in him, and, as by natural force
 Of feeling and high courage, bore him on
 Nobly awhile above the surgy tide.
 But still more wondrous was the might which came
 Quick to his aid when all the force of thought,
 And faith itself declined, and he was left
 Powerless as an infant, while the waves,
 Which heretofore had been like solid ground,
 Opened beneath him into measureless gulfs
 Of hideous darkness. Marvellous then the power
 Which at the word of Jesus re-assured
 His horror-stricken spirit, and again
 Gave him to feel that where the master is
 There may the servant be.

On board the bark,
 Where Jesus now serenely musing stood,
 Silence and awe prevailed. The raging winds
 Lay swooning on the deep : and the rude waves
 Broke into ripples, stealing to the shore
 As they are wont in quiet afternoons
 Of the mid summer. Swiftly went the bark,
 And smoothly as a firefly when it cuts
 The dusky air, and fills the line it draws

With melting gold. About the rounded keel
 The waters rose empurpled, till they caught
 Vermillion lustre from the early dawn,
 And with a fresher life their burden bore
 To the fair strand.

Capernaum to day

Is full of festive throngs: the olden love
 Of the great Maccabees still fires the hearts
 Of those who dwell among the mountain heights,
 And know not yet to bow the patriot neck
 To Rome, or its base parasites. To day,
 They celebrate the deed which first announced
 In Modin's walls what holy zeal can dare.
 And many a soul there is which now would fain
 Dare the same deeds; nor cease till they had torn
 The flaunting eagle from yon haughty tower,
 Bristling with Roman spears. But other thoughts,
 And a new mood have changed the fiery looks,
 And daring speech of many who had come,
 With purpose good or ill, to draw the sword
 Against the heathen. Liberal as the air,
 The son of old Alphaus spreads his feast,
 And gladly spends whate'er his thrifty toil,

Or happy lot has given him. Not a house
 In all Capernaum will to day behold
 A board more freely decked ; nor is there host
 Whose voice will give more welcome to his guests,
 Whence'er they come.

But not as heretofore,
 When they who were the wealthiest only found
 Such welcome there : now wealth hath lost its charm,
 Its right to the first place where men are met,
 As men and not as idols of the world.
 Nor indisputed now the claim of those
 Whose highest worth is in their names or robes.
 They find the warmest greeting who have best
 Approved their readiness to bear whate'er
 Of grief or toil the ordinance of heaven
 Hath mingled with their lot. And seated there,
 Are some on whom the indignant eye of scorn
 Had still been justly fixed, but for the grace
 Of penitence sincere and contrite hearts.
 Amid that throng of guests Alphaeus' son
 Hath hailed, with reverent looks and holy joy,
 Jesus his master, at whose word that morn
 He had forsaken all those hopes of gain,

Which for long years had marr'd and bowed his soul.
 Like one set free from bondage, and returned
 To gladsome fields oft dreamed of in his cell,
 He felt that wonderment, itself of joys
 The greatest here, which ever fills the mind
 In its first passages from earth to heaven.

Discourse which best was fitted to inspire
 Such thoughts in all, grew rife among the guests
 Wherever Jesus passed: and many a tale
 Of deep significance He told. Experience
 Was not with Him the lesson which is taught
 By one poor life; but the rich flood of truth,
 Drawn from all hearts confiding what they know
 To that which best can love. And hence his words
 Breathing of heaven, embodied whatso'er
 Is dearest to humanity, or needs
 The care of erring souls.

Nor taught He thus,
 Those earnest listeners only, how the voice
 Of his pure wisdom may refresh the heart.
 In them He taught the world, the complex mass
 Of man in every age and every clime.

And they who hear his voice, be it when toil
 Bears heavily upon them, or when time
 Has worn out seasons, and, pretending joy,
 Invites men to the funeral-feast ; or when,
 With more of homely pleasure, they embrace
 Some rare-recurring chance for interchange
 Of hospitable greetings,—whensoe'er
 The voice of Jesus echoes in men's hearts,
 There is a fuller and a deeper sense
 Of the pure inspiration and the charm
 Of friendship, or the keener bliss of love.
 Nor need we doubt the gracious truth that they,
 Who seek and own his presence, shall partake
 Where'er they meet, of that ennobling word
 Which first leads men to own their common sin,
 And then unites them in a common joy.

In many a house where grief, desponding, sat
 Watching the bed of anguish ; or alone
 Struggling with woe, unpitied, poor and wan,
 The widow wept ; or orphans just had learnt
 How cheerless is the parentless abode,
 And yet how hard to leave it for the world—
 More cheerless still : in many a home where thus

Sorrow was pressing heaviest on the heart,
 Reports of Jesus ; of the words He spake,
 And marvellous deeds performed, were as the sound
 Of a friend's voice heard in the night at sea,
 And telling us that though the tempest roars,
 And darkness reigns around, the helmsman steers
 Wisely and well his course. In some arose
 A feeling of pure confidence and love,
 When first the welcome tidings reached their ears
 Of that which Jesus taught : some sat and mused
 On that which they were told of miracles
 Wrought by his word : and brooding thus they felt
 Hope kindling in their hearts ; and long ere dawn
 Had dimmed the taper by the sick man's couch,
 The weeping watcher at his side had framed
 A prayer to Jesus, and but looked for day
 To seek his presence.

One there was in whom
 A growing agony had wrought so deep
 Into the soul, that it had learnt to think,
 To feel, and reason on the track of grief
 With an especial skill : whate'er there was,
 Had been, or could be, on the path of pain,

He had contemplated, and knew its force,
Waiting its coming as another man
Would look for friend or foe. But even he
Of Jesus heard with wonder ; and the forms
Which vagrant hope had bred fled phantom-like
Before that truer vision.

And behold !

That man of many woes was suffering now
The greatest of his griefs ; for he had one
Fair child, so fair and gentle that it seemed
A piety to love her with the love
Which mingles with all thoughts of good, and sheds
A light upon eternity. But death
Was nigh at hand : her father pressed her cheek
Close to his own ; 'twas icy cold, but still
Her eyes were fixed on him ; and he could see
That she was striving through the gathering film
To answer his fond gaze. It was not prayer
Which burst then from his heart, but such a cry
As reaches heaven before the thought which comes
To make it supplication. For awhile,
Something like madness was at work with him.
It chanced that on that night the sultry air

Was rife with fiery meteors, and the crash
 Of thunder, horribly discordant, broke
 The quiet dream of death. But to the ear
 Of him who felt that earth was at the best
 A prison, or a charnel-house, the roar
 Of the fierce tempest, with its vivid fires,
 Which seemed but like the standard just unfurled
 Of God's avenging hosts, brought welcome news.
 Hopelessly he laid, scarce conscious now,
 His child upon her couch, and then went forth,
 Passing from room to room, and seeking where
 The lightning shone most fiercely, giving sign
 Of speedy dissolution to the frame
 Of this abhorred and love-deserted world.

And morning came, and with a wanton look
 Of careless beauty seemed to mock the woe
 She saw around. But never nature smiles
 Deceitfully : no ray of light e'er falls
 Upon this earth but it is meant to be
 A path-way for the thoughts of some tired mind,
 Or broken heart, to heaven.

And so he found,
 Who all night long so stern a fight had waged

With his fierce agony. Returning day
Brought with it hope, for to his mind again
The words of Jesus rose with added force ;
And casting one brief look upon the couch
Where motionless lay his child, forth hurried he
Into the busy streets. One thought alone
His throbbing heart possessed ; and those who saw
The misery depicted on his brow,
Said, whispering to each other as he passed,
That none but Jesus could such sorrows heal,
Or help such deep distress.

And on he went,
Till to the margin of the lake he came,
Where the great master taught, in happiest hour,
His chosen followers. Short the tale, and few
The words of Jairus, but those words sufficed
To win from Jesus the benign regard
Of surest pity. With the hastened step
Which answered to the father's anxious sighs,
And supplicating looks, He soon had reached
Capernaum's crowded mart ; nor had He paused,
But that the deepening gladness of his soul,
The joy which ever told Him when his power
Had lessened grief in others, now betrayed

The secret faith of one in whom the awe
Attending faith was greater than the faith.
 And blessed was the truth then first revealed !
 For she who sought with but a simple trust
 The Saviour's aid, and with unuttered prayers
 Cast all her sorrows at his feet, had found
 How that omnipotent love will bow itself,
 And open all its fountains, and bestow
 The fulness of its blessings, when it sees
 The broken heart confiding in its power.

But lo ! while clamorous voices of delight,
 Mingled with sighs from souls more deeply touched,
 Proclaim what joy the wondering crowd pervades,
 A messenger has come from Jairus' house
 To tell that all is o'er.

Sad sight it was ;

The father's pallid face just lit by smiles,
 And his whole frame erect with thrilling hopes,
 But now at once struck down, as if on him,
 As on his child, the hand of death had fall'n.
 Then was the voice of Jesus heard again,
 'Fear not,' but trust : and Jairus felt the blood

Rush to his breast, dependent now no more
 Upon its earthly fountain. Soon they reached
 The portal of his house, and there the sounds
 Of lamentation burst upon his ear,
 So clear, distinct, and piercing, that he turn'd
 To look at Jesus, as he would have asked,
 'And canst thou save her?' But his lips refused
 To utter what he thought, and passing through
 The crowd which mocked, as ever crowds will do,
 The promises of heaven, the Saviour stands
 Beside the maiden's couch.

As there she slept,
 None who had known no more of death than that
 Which he had wrought in laying her meek head
 More calmly on the pillow, could have deemed
 That it was wise or loving to recall
 Her spirit from his realms. The very look
 Of pure contentment; the complaisant smile
 Of joy diffused in equal streams, throughout
 The inmost nature; and which seemed to be
 Sweet recognition of the lovelier forms
 That lie beyond the limits of the earth,—
 All this betokened gain not loss; and they

Who had no right to call her theirs, nor knew
 What with the voice was gone, did little wrong
 In thinking such repose for one beloved
 A better lot than life.

But not to them,

In whom the strong realities of grief
 Demanded surer solace, could the dream,
 Though beautiful and true, of happier souls,
 Give aught of comfort : Death to them was death ;
 Nor could another voice but that which now
 Proclaimed it sleep, and bade the maid arise,
 Have ever made them with their broken hearts,
 Believe it other than it was and is.

Bright shone the sun that day ; and every where,
 Throughout Capernaum, joyful voices told
 What had been done for Jairus. But in vain
 The curious multitude with eager steps
 Sought Jesus on the shore where He was wont
 To teach his followers. Swiftly o'er the lake,
 Wafted by favouring winds, a fisher's bark
 Had borne Him to a sylvan nook of land,
 Begirt by rocks, but pleasant as a bower

Built by the art of gentle hands for one
 Dearly beloved, yet whose fond mood it was
 To dwell in solitude.

There oft with those,
 Who now, from day to day, more skilful grew,
 In the pure meditation of his words,
 Jesus in tranquil joyousness reposed,
 And spoke of times to come, when earth again
 Should be as beautiful as when at first
 It felt the breath of heaven. Nor waited He
 Occasion fit, in those sweet hours of rest,
 To tinge discourse with those intenser hues,
 That deeper colouring, than befits the forms
 Of earth or time. And they who heard him speak
 Of the eternal future, and compare
 That with the past, soon felt that not to Him
 The past was as to them ; nor things to be
 Unreal images. Thus led, their souls
 Passed to and fro along the worlds which own
 No fealty to time ; or as they gazed
 Upon the scenes familiar to their eyes,
 Saw in them beauty which a promise gave
 Of still impressing with its living power
 A world to follow this.

Precious those hours

Of undisturbed communion and repose !
Then learnt the human heart how best to strive
Against its own mortality ; and how,
Aided by love divine, to change whate'er
Among its chosen treasures is defiled
By taint of sin, and of it form a gem
For virtue's holiest crown. Then learnt the heart,
Doubting and weak itself, to own the grace
Of bounteous heaven, and by its light to scan
The heights and depths of nature, not confined
To this contracted sphere, but nature still
Up to the throne of God, where Jesus sits
Supreme o'er all, because of all the life !

END OF BOOK FOURTH.

BOOK V.

ARGUMENT.

Jesus journeys to Jerusalem. The ten lepers. Incidental account of the widow's son at Nain. Jesus on Mount Olivet. Evening at Bethany. Return to Jerusalem. Inward trials. Gethsemane. Jesus apprehended. Judas. The Crucifixion.

Book the Fifth.



Still led by love divine and holiest zeal,
Full oft had Jesus, from the utmost bounds
Of Galilee to Zion's sacred walls,
The pilgrim's route pursued. His work fulfill'd,
In all but that which was to crown his toils
With sacrificial worth, again He watched
The paschal crescent moon, whose silver rays,
Flowing from night to night in broader streams,
Seemed marking in the heavens the steps He set
Here upon earth towards his destined goal.
But where could Jesus dwell, or whither turn
His thoughtful gaze in this dark world, nor meet
With those who claimed his help?

A gloomy length

Of arid wastes, shut in by shapeless walls
 Of crumbling rocks, before the travellers lay.
 'Twas such a solitude as none had loved
 For its own sake, had not some grief of heart,
 Mingled with shame, and hate, and sore disgust
 Of the world's usage, taught them to behold
 Sadness as beauty. But where highest rose
 The beetling crags, and chilling twilight hung
 O'er all the vale, a melancholy group
 Of wretched men approached. They bore the marks
 Of loathsomest disease. Some struck their breasts,
 As frantic with despair; while others wept
 With a tame wretchedness: one only raised
 His eyes to heaven, as if he there might find
 Some solace for his misery. They came
 From a near hamlet, and the solemn voice
 Of the stern priest which left them not a home,
 Still sounded in their ears. The foul white spot
 Of leprosy was on them; and of all
 Who loved them as their kindred, or with hearts
 Knit by still closer ties, not one had dared
 To tend them now. Houseless and friendless all,
 They clung together sharing their despair

As other men a banquet. Thus they sought
 That dreary waste, where they might hope to find
 An undisputed shelter. Strange the fear
 Which seized them when afar they first beheld
 Jesus amid his followers. To them
 His calm majestic look was terrible:
 They saw in it a purity which pierced
 Their souls with keener anguish than the voice
 Of the sharp law, or priestly bitterness.

But he, a poor Samaritan, whose griefs
 Had taught him how to pray, with quick rebuke
 Suppress'd the rising murmurs. Joy to him
 It was to see again that gracious form,
 Which erst in Sychar, like the day-star, shed
 Comfort and light on all. Few words revealed
 To those who shared his misery what cause
 Had given such sudden gladness to his looks.
 "Behold" he cried, "'tis Jesus: He who came
 One day to Sychar, and such blessed thoughts
 Left in our hearts that whereso'er we stray,
 We of a hated race, still feel that light
 From heaven is on our paths. Not long ago,
 I passed by Nain, and at its gates beheld

An aged widow weeping o'er the bier
 Of her lost son. Could I have given my life
 For his, I would have done it : others too
 Had done the same, so bitter was the grief
 Of that poor mother : yet no one could say,
 'Weep not' for we ourselves but wept the more,
 The more we strove to comfort her. But He,
 Yon friend of all that mourn, when He beheld
 Her agony, could say 'weep not' for He
 Had joy in store for her. With that same tone
 Which first awoke my own dull heart to life,
 He said to Him upon the bier, 'Arise :'
 And the dead youth arose, and with the look
 Of one awakened out of sleep, whose dreams
 Had borne him to some distant land, he fell
 Upon his mother's neck, and prayed to heaven
 That he might still be spared to her."

Thus spake

The leper ; and his words gave hope to those
 Who had been hopeless. With uplifted hands
 They cried aloud to Jesus, nor in vain
 Called they upon Him ; for a sudden thrill,
 The ecstasy of health, shot through their limbs,
 And told them they were cleansed. With clamorous joy

Back to their homes they rushed, and there forgot—
 All but that poor Samaritan—the debt
 They owed to Jesus.

Bliss supreme it was

To those who called Him master, to behold
 The marvels of his power. They could not doubt,
 But that the voice which lepers cleansed, and gave
 Sight to the blind ; which raised the dead, and hurl'd
 Rebellious devils back to their abyss,
 Would soon be heard above the boastful cry
 Of the world's rulers. But as, day by day,
 They journey'd on, the looks of Jesus shew'd
 That thoughts possess'd Him, not like those which fill
 The vain and sickly soul of one who sighs
 To wear the mask of high degree. He spoke
 Of things which sounded strangely to their ears ;
 Of contumely and suffering, and a death
 Most terrible. Dark contrast, words like these,
 To those bright images of dazzling pomp,
 Which long had mingled with their better hopes
 Of truth and holiness ! But still He told
 How that the cross awaited him, and when
 Impatient zeal, rebuke or argument,
 Revealed the earthly passions of the few,

Whom thus his love forewarned, benignly stern
 He bowed their spirits to the yoke, and shewed
 That they who would not bear the cross must leave
 The kingdom and the crown for nobler souls.

It was an hour past sunset, when again
 Jesus once more his wonted path pursued
 Up the green steep of Olivet. A ray
 Of silver light, shot from the cloudless moon,
 Cut with its sharp keen lustre, like the edge
 Of an archangel's sword, the blue expanse
 Of the dark firmament. Here lay inshrined
 In deep unbroken shade the massive round
 Of ancient Zion, while above the towers
 Antonia and Phasælus, boast and shame
 Of the first Herod, played a fitful gleam
 Of growing radiance.

In silent thought

Jesus beheld the solemn scene, as one
 Who looks upon the patriarchal halls
 Of a long race of noble ancestors,
 And knows that soon the vengeful hand of war
 Will lay them in the dust.

Grateful to Him

The change which o'er his burden'd spirit pass'd,
 When down the steep he traced, through silent groves
 Of cypresses and olives, and a maze
 Of flowery herbage, his accustomed way
 To pleasant Bethany. Far down a vale,
 Rich with the first and sweetest gifts of spring,
 The happy village lay. Each quiet home
 Stood 'mid its own fair group of Lotus trees,
 And flowering oleanders, myrtles and limes ;
 And as the night wind swept along, it drew
 From each its fragrant tribute. Not a sound
 Broke on the ear save that of mountain rills,
 Which like belated children seemed to trip,
 Prattling from rock to rock. 'Twas such an hour
 As strengthens in the spirit of good men
 The love of peace, and teaches them to blend
 All purposes in that which gives at last
 Purest repose.

But Jesus now had reached

The abode of Lazarus: joyful at first
 The greeting, but not long the smile remained
 Which welcomed his approach. Words few and sad

Revealed that not again as heretofore
 Might they behold Him. Quick and scalding tears
 Streamed from the eyes of those who had begun
 To think of Him as of a friend, as one
 Who, greater though He was than lips dare tell,
 Might yet be loved, and with such love as bears
 No thought of separation. But a calm,
 Unutterably sweet, succeeded soon
 To that convulsive grief ; for Jesus spake
 Of God and heaven so clearly to the hearts
 Of those who heard Him now, that they awhile
 Forgot that it was grief which claimed their tears,
 And shed them all for joy.

But Lazarus,

Felt, looked, and spake as one who, just returned
 From a far distant land, has met with him
 Who claims to be its prince. Words strange to those
 Who sat and listened, passed between the two
 Who knew the world beyond the grave. They spake
 Of wonders which no eye had seen ; of things
 Which had no form, till by the plastic power
 Of his own grace and wisdom, Jesus gave
 A visible beauty to them. Silently,

In fond but awful rapture, Mary caught
 The simplest accents from his lips. To her
 Each word he uttered gleamed with light, and shed
 Lustre o'er that vast region which had been
 Awhile her brother's home, and now to him
 Was as a vision grand but terrible,—
 A solemn revelation of the night,
 Made to one trusted soul, that there might be
 A link between the living and the dead.

Hour after hour had fled, and few remained
 For slumber or repose ; but still the dew
 Lay heavy on the grass, as Jesus passed
 Along the silent vale. The rugged brink
 Of Kedron reached, a flash of ruddy beams
 Foretold the dawning day ; and when He stood
 Halfway up Olivet, the ambient skies
 Shed forth such lustre that the colourless air
 Grew purple with its blushes.

Jesus paused:

No more his eyes should rest, as now they did,
 On Zion's fated towers: now fell the last
 Of those pure tears, which He had shed in vain

For her and for her children. With a pang
 Of natural anguish, from that scene He turned ;
 But not to dwell on happier. For throngs
 Of turbulent scoffers met Him as He sought,
 With mien composed, the temple's sacred courts.
 Proud Scribes and prouder Pharisees were there ;
 And mingled with them, angry priests, whose looks
 Told that the night would be indeed a night
 Of darkness and distress when spirits like theirs,
 Had the pre-eminence. And courtiers too,
 Fresh from the halls of Herod, bore their part
 In the rude conclave. Round about them pressed
 Reckless blasphemers ; bandits, and a crew
 Of moody zealots, o'er whose shoulders peeped
 Demoniacs, as waiting to be told
 What work there was to do.

But calmly fell

The words of Jesus on the anxious ear
 Of many a patient listener ; nor to them
 Spake He of aught but mercy. While He told
 Of God's expected judgments, hope arose
 With more of brightness to the sinner's heart,
 Than when the glozing scribe in flattery masked
 The terrors of the law.

Thus Jesus taught,

On that last day of his appointed toil.
 But there were for a soul so pure as his
 Peculiar griefs. The conscious innocence
 Which blunts the sting of shame will leave the blush
 Of injured honor : pain and the agony,
 The piercing agony which follows life
 From nerve to nerve, but stops where life itself
 Has its known boundary, may be firmly borne,
 And yet if linked with supernatural awe
 Will crush the spirit.

And thus, as on He passed
 Towards the hour in which all sins and woes
 Known to the human soul should meet, and be
 His proper burden, deep'ning sorrow seized
 The heart of Jesus : He beheld himself
 In the clear mirror of his thoughts as one
 In whom no beauty dwelt ; deserted, scorned,
 The mark at which proud ignorance, and hate,
 And, worse than either, honesty beguiled
 From its own truth, would point their keenest shafts.
 And thus like one who, ere the tempest rise,
 Feels all its terrors in the sulphurous air,

He saw the darkness of the coming hour
 Grow round about Him; and within His soul
 Sounded distinct tumultuous voices, taught
 To heap upon Him curses. 'Twas a time
 Of trial such as never man had borne,—
 Prophet or priest, or monarch,—for He felt
 That then, if man o'ercame not, man must fall
 Deeper than ever, and for ever fall.
 He loved the world as peopled with His kind;
 He owned each man his brother; every home,
 Each hearth, each altar, had around it bands
 Which were as dear to Him as ever child
 On festive eve, when hearts feel most of love,
 Is dear to those who love Him. And all these
 He had to save! for these His blood was asked!
 And more than that: to save the guilty, He
 Must bear their guilt; and, in the face of heaven,
 Be clothed with their iniquities. Dread thought!
 But not so dread as that which shewed the world,
 With all its countless homes, for ever lost
 To joy or hope. A moment in His soul
 The balance seemed suspended; nature weighed
 Its own expected agony against
 The woes of man: that awful moment pass'd,

And, lo! the dreaded pain, the cross, the shame,
 The mad revilings of the world itself,
 Were as a feather in the scale to gold
 Heaped up in ingots.

But the hour was come,
 And Jesus raised his eyes to heaven and prayed.
 Nor prayed He then as one upon whose path
 Death darkling stood. His was the mighty heart,
 Which, when it thought of others in their state
 Of permanent weal or woe, could quite forget
 His own worst passing care. He felt that time
 Blunted the sting of death in all its forms,
 And if of death, of fear, pain, obloquy,
 And all the dire varieties of grief.
 And hence as now He prayed 'twas for the things
 Which are eternal, and profoundest joy
 Filled his pure spirit, as He saw the heavens
 Opening their deep recesses to receive
 Those whom his cross should save.

And in the joy
 Which thus his soul possessed, He kept the feast,
 That ancient feast which now no more should be

Symbol or shadow, but a banquet spread
 With the true bread of life for all mankind.
 And then it was that by the will which first
 Brought Him from heaven, He sanctified himself,
 A victim chosen and prepared to bleed.
 Nor less the priest than sacrifice ; and hence,
 Already self-devoted, He bestowed
 That food on those who had the faith to taste
 The life within it, which to them, and all
 Who since have shared that banquet, was to be
 Such in its nature as his nature is
 In souls which He has quicken'd. One alone
 Of those that sat with Him, and from his lips
 Heard the familiar blessing, felt not now
 A deeper love, a more mysterious awe
 Than ere had touched them when his solemn voice
 Most stirred their souls. That one alone betrayed
 Unquiet thoughts. His eye, which strove to look
 As if it gazed on vacancy, grew fixed
 When Jesus spake of traitors and their fate.
 But at his side a fearful phantom stood,
 And in his ear it whispered blasphemies,
 And to his heart sent fiery streams of thought
 To feed the inborn devil. Then no more

Fearing resistance, of the man himself
 It took possession, and in darkness pass'd
 Into the night without.

And now the power
 Was given to those ill spirits to fulfil
 Their destined work,—and Jesus as he sought
 The shades of lone Gethsemane, beheld
 Traitor and tempter both,—the fiercer he
 Which bore the mortal form.

That one was lost
 Whom he had loved so well, and one to whom
 So gladly he had given what bliss so'er
 His saints may know in heaven, first bowed the soul
 Of Jesus to the cross. Nor had he been
 Noble and pure—a man so true to man—
 Had he not shrunk from infamy ; from death
 As nature's dark antagonist,—from hate,
 Even though base, as that which surest proves
 Man's loss and wretchedness.

But heavier grew
 The burden of his spirit. Blended there
 Lay human woe and guilt, and, like the fire
 Which mingles with its fuel, heavenly wrath.
 Fearful the burden for one single will !

Awful the struggle for one heart to bear !
 But as the darkness grew, so mightier grew
 The love which gave the will and heart its power.
 This was the moment from the first foreseen :
 That point within the circle of all time,
 When man while suffering all that man can bear,
 Should bow himself unquestioning to God.
 And then such victory had been gained for man
 O'er all the powers of darkness, that henceforth
 He might have dared the tempter ; but the will,
 The mind and its pure reason, may have won
 A crown of glory, while the throbbing heart,
 So complex in its passions, feels a death
 In every pulse.

And Jesus thus prevailed,
 Yet suffered. Far above the taunts of hell,
 And even that cloud of fiery wrath which veiled
 His Father's justice, rose his conquering soul :
 But all which thought could rule not,—all which life
 Is to the heart beyond its power to will,
 Knew naught but bitterness. It was an hour
 When Jesus would have thanked the humblest child
 To watch with Him ; when he had felt it joy
 To know that in the darkness there were hearts

Awake to his. But not for Him the love
Which wakes to weep; nor was it till he wiped
Huge drops of bloody sweat from off his brow
That aught but hell seemed stirring in the air.
Then gleams of light fell round Him, and behold!
A ministering band of angels stood
Obedient to his wish.

But soon the night
Resumed its terrors, and each passing hour
Came as a messenger of wrath. Betrayed,
Denied, prejudged, forsaken, Jesus stands
Before the heathen's throne. Nor failed he there
To feel and overcome whate'er the mind
Great, free, and noble, will endure when truth
Can do no more than suffer. Even the scourge
But drew from Him such sighs as quicken still
The hearts of patriots, when they dare to weep.
That man should shame his fellow.

Day had dawned,
And round the Fort Antonia, and the gates
Of the Prætorium, pressed the eager crowd
Which through the night had watched the hurried steps
Of priests and scribes, and those whose task it was
To seek Gethsemane. And now there rushed

Forth from the hall of Pilate one whose looks
 Had seemed less sad or terrible had they been
 Madman's or fiend's : but they bespoke a man
 Who thought and reasoned, and whose bursting heart
 Was the chief devil in him. As he passed,
 Dashing the impeding multitude aside,
 His right hand grasped a bag, heavy with coin
 Which rattled as he went, and seemed to urge
 The wretch to further speed.

Again the throng,

Had sunk into a moody dream, when lo !
 Jesus before them stood. Fierce shouts arose,
 And horrible laughter ; and the piercing shrieks
 Of women, and the deeper sounds of grief,
 As when men weep o'er sons in battle slain,—
 All mingling rent the air, till low and clear
 One voice suppressed the clamour. It was his
 Who on the judgment seat had half declared
 Jesus divine, and now before the world
 Confessed Him as "The Man !"

But vain such homage.

He who spake, nor all unconscious spake,
 Those words of solemn import, hath returned
 To feast with Annas, and with stern contempt

Hears the wild clamour which proclaims the march
 To Calvary. To those who since have traced
 That path of grief, but short the way hath seemed
 From Pilate's hall to that rude mountain's brow ;
 But woe to him who, with his pilgrim's staff,
 Should strive to climb that height, if on his soul
 There lay of sin, or real or assumed,
 Aught like the burden which that sufferer bore
 Who sanctified the way.

As step by step,

He wound around the rocks which overhung
 The barren plain, distinctly rose to view
 The one dark crag which men, from age to age,
 Had marked as fitting scene for deeds abhorr'd.
 Nor lingered they who urged his feeble frame
 Up the steep eminence, till they had reached
 Its loftiest ledge. There paused they, and awhile
 Jesus, with brow serene and eye undimmed,
 Beheld the countless multitudes which strove
 Like winter floods to gain the paths which led
 To Golgotha. But suddenly a thrill
 Of horror runs through all his veins. He feels
 An iron grasp upon his shrinking frame ;
 A moment serves to strip Him of his garb :

Another sees him prostrate on the earth;
 And hammers rise and fall, and streams of blood
 Spout in the air, and in an instant more
 The cross stands fixed, and Jesus quivering hangs
 High o'er the beetling mount.

A shout as if

The sea had rolled below, and from its depths
 Had broken loose, rose slow and heavily
 Upon the troubled wind, then died away,
 Leaving such stillness, that men seemed to hear
 What each to each was saying in his heart.
 But in the lull of that wild tempest, raised
 By passionate wonder, on the narrow ridge
 Of Calvary, discourse, profound and sweet,
 Fell on the ear of those who there had found
 A place above the multitude. The cross
 Of Jesus stood not far from those which bore,
 On either side of his, a culprit doomed
 To die for crimes abhorred. On that which rose
 At his right hand, bled one whose guilt confessed
 Lay heavy on his heart, but heavier still
 On that grey-headed father who had won
 His way up to the cross, and now with tears,
 And half-choaked utterance told his dying boy,

That soon upon the altar would be laid
 The Paschal lamb : "O claim," he cried, "of God
 Forgiveness through its blood." "I will, I will,"
 And turning to the cross where Jesus hung,
 "Remember me, O Lord," he sighed, "when Thou
 Shalt to thy kingdom come." However blest
 Prince, peer, or peasant hath been in his child,
 Never hath father yet such gladness known,
 As he who heard the voice of Jesus then
 Thus to his son addressed : "This day with me
 Shalt thou in Paradise abide." No more
 Needed he now to see or hear : he felt
 That he who spake was that great sacrifice
 Foreshadowed and foretold ; nor doubted he
 But that the bleeding frame, the darkened brows,
 Heavy with growing death, which he had fain
 Washed with his streaming tears, would now be bathed
 In the pure streams of heaven.

But again

Spake Jesus. 'Mid the countless griefs which lay
 Upon his soul, one natural care still held
 Its foremost place. He heard his mother's sighs ;
 He felt that she was clinging to his cross.
 There was but one whose love might imitate

The calm, untiring fondness of his own :
 And that one trusted friend had fixed his eyes
 Intent on his. "Behold thy mother," gave
 An answer to the deep inquiring look,
 "What, Master, is thy will?"

But, lo ! the sun
 Reaching the highest heavens, hath brought with it
 Not glory as of wont. Around its orb
 Gathered the gloom of night, and o'er the earth
 Such darkness came as if the gracious law,
 "Let there be light," no longer held its place
 'Mid the Creator's precepts. Deeper grew
 The silence with the darkness ; and the ear
 Of one who stood on Calvary might catch
 The voices of the Levites as they paced
 The Temple courts, and chaunted solemn strains
 Responsive to the priests, who trembling crouched
 About their altars.

Thus from hour to hour
 Intenser horror reigned ; and as it grew
 So swelled the heart of Jesus with a sense
 Of utter desolation, and such pain
 As reck'd not of the law which gave it bounds,
 But brake down all defences of the soul,

And mingled in one huge distress the griefs
 Of body and spirit. Nor shone upon Him then
 One ray of light from heaven. Whate'er of power,
 Whate'er of grace and love, might freely flow,
 Without confusion, from the God to man,
 Had heretofore been to Him as the joy
 Of higher health and knowledge are to all
 Who live to God and Heaven. But of these
 Nought now remained. It was for Him to bear
 The penalty of sin,—for sin to die,
 As He had been the sinner ; and the light
 Shrunk from around Him, as the myriad crimes,
 The thick infectious guilt, for which He bled,
 Press'd closer to his heart, that they might find
 Atonement there. One loud and bitter wail
 Escaped his lips, when thus imputed sin
 Had wholly driven all traces from his soul
 Of God and heaven, and left it to itself
 With only death about it.

But justice saw
 The sacrifice complete, and truth proclaimed
 The word fulfilled, which till fulfilled had kept
 The soul of Jesus bound to earth with bars
 Stronger than adamant. Now forth it fled,

And wondering spirits in the boundless realms
Of Hadés hailed its coming, and confessed
It sovereign of their world.

But woe and fear,

And wild amazement held tempestuous sway
From Calvary to Zion. Fiercely roared
The warring winds. A power unseen and dread,
Shoke to their base the giant towers that stood
On Akra and Bezetha. Round about
The Temple courts, and o'er each altar, swept
Strange shadows, and the sound of voices heard
As in a dream: but when the darkness hung
Thickest o'er Calvary, shrill clarion blasts
Pealed through the air, and lo! the veil was rent
Which hid from man God's mercy's seat.

And then

Triumph and joy had filled all hearts, could tears
Of true and bitter penitence have fall'n.
But darkness still had rule; and ere the night
Of that dread day was spent, or fierce despair,
Or impious fraud, and boisterous revelry,
Had sunk Jerusalem in a deeper guilt.

END OF BOOK FIFTH.

BOOK VI.

ARGUMENT.

People from Jerusalem seek the neighbouring Country. The disciples of Jesus wander about the scene of his sufferings. The walk to Emmaus. Appearance of Jesus to his disciples in the room where they were met. His re-appearance on the shore of the Lake Genesareth. His Ascension. Signs of his presence. Conclusion.

Book the Sixth.



A long and sunny tranquil afternoon
Had lured, with sweet enticement, from their toil,
Or festal games, a motley multitude.
Some passed with quiet steps the gate which led
Towards Siloam, and the pensive vale
Of famed Jehoshaphat ; while others roamed
Along the banks of pleasant streams which ran
Through that broad verdant plain, whereon of yore
The mightiest of the sons of men abode.
Gardens and groves, and every breezy hill,
Had each its gladsome group. But there were those,
Though few, upon whose spirits still there lay
The gloom of Calvary. Of these, some sought
Gethsemane, or lingered round the base
Of the dread mount. Others of quicker hope
Had met together in an upper-room

To pray and meditate. But two there were,
 Whose faith and sorrow had an equal part
 In all they thought and spake ; and with the strife,
 Fevered and sad, they took their lonely way
 To Emmaus. The balmy breezes played
 Freshly around them ; and the mellow light
 Poured evening's richest tints upon their path.
 Fervent discourse employed them ; but in vain
 They strove to solve the fearful doubt which grew
 Darker as waned the day, before whose close,
 If Jesus spake aright, He should have stood
 Again among his people.

As thus they thought,

And to each other told their fears, a voice
 Of kindly greeting sounded by their side.
 It was the voice of one whose look and garb,
 Seen through the meshes of the golden veil
 Of the bright evening, seemed of nobler kind
 Than wont to meet the eyes of such as loved
 Lone country walks. But with familiar tones
 He followed in the train of their discourse ;
 And ever and anon a stream of light
 Flashed on their minds, as some strong word of his
 Battled its way through gloomy fears, and roused

Thought to its higher consciousness. But soon,
 They reached the rustic lodge by the way-side,
 Where they had oft reposed on summer eves,
 And with a patient memory studied o'er
 The words of Jesus. Greeting them again,
 The stranger passed along, but when they pressed
 His hand, and with entreaties manifold
 Besought his stay, He yielded to their wish,
 And took his place to share the simple meal
 Soon spread before them. They had told what joy
 Flowed from his words, and as He saw them weigh
 With still increasing earnestness his speech,
 So seemed there more of gladness in its tone,
 And more of joyousness in every form
 Which hope or memory wore. But when He blessed
 The bread and brake it, rapture, deep, intense,
 And trembling wonder held them. From their eyes
 A cloud had passed : revealed before them sat
 Their risen Lord. A ray of glory wreathed
 His calm, majestic brows ; effulgent grace
 Flowed round about Him ; but they saw no more :
 He had departed, as they bowed their heads
 With that mute worship which is all the heart
 Can give when overladen with its love.

As men who sit and talk of one whose step
 They long have listened for, but now begin
 To doubt his promised coming, and to chide
 Those who still look for Him, so sat and talked
 The little band of fond disciples met
 In that secluded dwelling, where awhile,
 The doors fast closed, they felt they might be free
 From tyrant malice. Peace and silence reigned.
 The broad full moon its silver lustre shed
 Through the tall latticed window, and dispersed
 The deep'ning twilight. Such an hour it was
 As forces on the mind the pleasant thought,
 That every hour hath in itself a life,
 A spirit, which in passing us but speaks
 Of its own journey to another sphere,
 Where it will meet with us again, and be
 More powerful for good.

Each heart was now

filled with its own best hopes ; unquiet dreams
 passed silently away ; a humble will,
 a readiness to wait and trust, proclaimed
 the action of some wond'rous power at work
 among those new enquirers.

And when thus

Sweetest repose prevailed; and if a voice
 Was heard, 'twas that of one whose inward prayer
 Unwittingly moved the lips,—when thus the hour
 Gave truest signs of life, in what it wrought
 In faithful, patient hearts ; lo ! Jesus stood
 Amid his people. Even the air stirred not
 Foretelling his approach. But never form
 Of more distinct, substantial, massive strength,
 Had moved on earth. His voice divinely sweet,
 Uttered such accents as might best recall
 The days most precious to the soul, and yet
 Lend more of strength to hope than memory.
 He blessed his worshippers, and with the word
 Which gave them peace, convinced them He was man,
 Man, and not spirit only : and though man,
 A traveller who had journeyed through the grave,
 And sought the world beyond, and had come back
 Replenished with the strength which he had drunk
 From gales and fountains there.

Another moon

Was on the wane, and softly fell its light
 Upon the Galilean lake, where lay
 The fisher's bark which oft had spread its sail
 Obedient to Jesus. Till the mists

Of the grey morning rose upon the waves,
 The patient crew, with wonted toil and skill,
 Their nightly task pursued. But all within
 Their hearts and minds was changed. Another life,
 Another work was theirs ; and, hour by hour,
 They thought but of the promise of their Lord,
 And of that day when, gifted with the power
 To make his glory known, their voice should rouse
 A slumbering world, and bring its myriad tribes
 To worship at his feet.

Such visions filled

Their souls: but now their bark had reached the shore,
 And, faintly visible through the dusky air,
 A stranger hailed them. By his words he seemed
 To know all depths and shallows of the lake,
 And all the fisher's art so well, that they
 Right gladly heard him as a man grown old
 In that employ. But one among them saw
 With keener eyes, and soon his brethren heard
 That Jesus waited them. Their early meal,
 Prepared beside the sheltering rock—the fire
 Whose cheerful blaze dispersed the chilly mist,—
 And friendly words as others came to land,
 Stiff with the cold and labour of the night,

Brought back to many a heart whate'er belonged
 To pleasant recollections of old toil,
 Perils escaped, and hardships well endured,
 Nor failed there in the thoughts which thus arose
 Food for discourse with Him, their guest revered,
 Who sat among them, nor untasted left
 Their simple viands. When the morning shone
 Full on the lake, He vanished ; but his form
 Hung as a shadow on the sparkling waves ;
 And they who loved Him most, still seemed to trace
 His presence wheresoe'er they turned : sometimes,
 High on the rocks ; at others 'mid the flowers,
 The crown'd and golden lilies, which o'erspread
 The sumptuous valleys : then again they thought
 He stood beside them, and his earnest gaze
 Made their hearts throb, as if it could not be
 A fancy of their own.

But he had named
 The very time and place when they, and those
 Who loved Him with such fervent love as theirs,
 Should once again behold Him ere He passed
 Into his kingdom. Swift the tidings flew
 Among his followers ; and when the day
 Appointed dawned, with looks of quiet joy,

They met as men who have great things to hear,
And mighty sights to see. Clear were the heavens,
And all around such silence reigned as fills
The ear of nature when she seems to wait
The presence of a mightier than herself.
And they who gathered on the sunny slopes
Of Olivet, or traced the vale beneath,
Told but by looks what in their hearts they hoped.
Nor passed there o'er the sky a fitting cloud,
Nor winged a bird its course along the air,
But many an eye was strained, as if to catch
Some other form. Each change or accident
Of shade or sunshine expectation roused ;
And when amid the pale green olive boughs
The light streamed suddenly ; or lower down,
Struck in its course oblique the cypress groves
Hard by the vale of Kedron, scarce suppressed,
Rose the quick murmur of delight. Again,
The longing heart, with doubt and questioning,
Awaited some new impulse ; better pleased
To be deceived than have no semblance given
Of that for which it hoped. But now at length
In the far distance, where the azure sky
Embraced the landscape in its dewy folds,

A form appeared ; awhile so slightly marked
 Upon the blue expanse, that some had deemed
 It was but of the air itself that grew
 Into distincter radiance. Lost again
 Beneath the sloping hills, then seen anew
 Upon a sun-bright eminence, the hearts
 Of hundreds leaped for joy, and glad acclaims
 Pronounced it was the Lord. But some there were
 Who dare not yet believe, till lo ! He stood
 Amid them, beaming with resplendent love ;
 Mature in look and form, and yet as one
 Not past his youth ; such light around Him poured
 As hangs upon the dewy robe of eve,
 Ere it is parted from the day.

And where had been his dwelling ? Whence that morn
 His untold journey ? Had He made his rest
 In some fair world to us unknown, and yet
 Fitted to be our home could we but grow
 Into his perfect likeness ? Had He left
 That world but now, and with an angel's flight
 Passed through unmeasured space, till on the hills
 His form grew visible ? Or had He spent
 The days appointed, ere he claimed his throne,

In traversing the earth's thick-peopled plains,
 And wilds that only waited for his word
 To teem with blessings ? Had He not, perchance,
 As some lone stranger, from a far-off land,
 Talked with old sages in Athenian groves,
 And listened to the proud debates which stirred
 Rome to its centre, and the world with Rome ?

There have been times in which a sense of power,
 A faith in wisdom, not of earth or man,
 Has moved the hearts of many. Whence they drew
 Their first deep draught of truth, 'twere hard to tell.
 They but remember that in days long since
 Some one of happy speech discoursed with them,
 And left them wiser.

And may it not have been
 That Jesus, not yet glorified, and still
 Linked to the earth by some mysterious tie,
 Then dropped upon the hearts of thoughtful men,
 Passing among them, precious seeds of life ?
 And, may He not himself have been the first
 To waken those who for the after age
 Prepared deliverance ? Was not his perchance
 The voice which echoed when in halls and camps
 Men learnt to feel that more than idol gods

Were needed for great souls ?

Nor strange to those,

Who love to meditate such themes, will be
 The vision of that conqueror of the grave
 Passing from land to land ; from sea to sea,
 And marking out the track,—as heretofore
 He marked the pathways for the stars in heaven,—
 Along whose lines his messengers should bear
 The book of life. Nor vain to such the thought,
 That in those journeyings, this our distant isle
 Might be awhile his resting-place : that here
 His eye might glance delighted over scenes
 'Mid which, in after times, his cross should be
 The symbol of all worth, the arm of power—
 Sceptre and baton of the prince and chief.
 And, if such fancies to the mind devout
 Be not unmeet, beyond the Western main
 Still may it view His track ; behold Him plant
 His standard there, true monarch of the realms,
 Destined when all the world beside has fall'n
 Into its dotage, to renew the strength
 Of prostrate tribes and nations.

But where'er

His dwelling or his wanderings, on his brow

There was no mark of weariness. He spake
 Of power bestowed upon Him ; of a throne
 Set high above the heavens ; but more He told
 Of that which might give happy thoughts to those
 Who waited on Him with obedient wills,
 But fearful hearts. And as the nearer grew
 The moment of his parting, so became
 His voice and look more tender, while the light
 Which floated round Him deepened, and the air
 Breathed with a living buoyancy.

And thus

'Tis ever when from earth benignant things,
 In element or spirit, pass away.
 The brighter shines the flame before it fails,
 The fuller radiance vests the sinking sun :
 The saint's benignest look is when he dies.
 And never yet to human eye had shone
 The human form so radiantly, as when
 Jesus, in act to bless the adoring crowd,
 Rose through the lustrous air, and onward rose
 Till clouds of glory crossed Him on his path.

And thou wast seen no more upon the earth,
 Lord of the quick and dead ! Nor since that hour
 Hast Thou in visible form thy people sought,

Thy glory now, perchance, too bright to be
 Even a moment clouded, or withdrawn
 From the deep channels it hath wrought in Thee.
 And some, of faith uncertain, and whose hearts
 Live but on what is seen, may deem thy power
 Less great on earth than when, with hand upraised,
 Thou didst control the deep, or free from thrall
 The fierce demoniac. They question not,
 But that thy love, when it did speak in words
 Audible to the ear, might win to hope
 The saddest spirit ; but not so they think
 Of that same love of thine when only felt,
 Revealed and working, through the hidden depths
 Of spiritual natures. Dark themselves,
 They ween not of the light which permeates
 The world of actual being ; sensual,
 They mould in clay the objects of their faith ;
 And when they will not wear the form they seek,
 Cease to adore or trust them. Woe to these !
 But worse, alas ! the fate of such as deem
 That Jesus is but one of many names
 Framed for some charm or amulet ; and which,
 Not even a pendent to the heart, but borne
 A shadow on the shadow of the man,

Will yet suffice to save them from the ills
 Which they but fear as shadows. Yet again,
 Others there are of still a darker mood,
 And to whose ears the name of Jesus sounds
 As but some vain and boastful title claimed,
 In ages fraught with folly, for their God.
 Alas for them and for the homes of such!
 'Tis not alone their peril, that a time
 Of terrible revealings shall arrive,
 It is that now, no less than in the past,
 Or in the promised future, He that died
 And rose again, is sovereign over all;
 And that the question which would shake his throne,
 Weakens the deep foundations of the world—
 Precious to mortal man as heaven itself
 To man immortal. Here, no less than there,
 Jesus is that one source of life and light,
 Whence nature and all subject to her laws
 Derive the power which lost, or misapplied,
 Leaves them to formless anarchy.

'Tis true
 Where once the cross was planted, and the world
 Hailed it, as warlike hosts the signal hail
 Of a great battle won, even there the foe

Now treads beneath his feet succeeding hordes
 Of abject slaves. The Isthmian capital,
 Church of the living God, and Ephesus,
 Home of the fore-ordained, and Antioch,
 Around whose cypress shades, and laurel bowers,
 No less than in its schools, fond spirits learned
 To give their hearts to Jesus;—These no more
 Would echo to the words of truth though breathed
 By an Archangel's voice. But wherefore mourn
 As if amid those scenes the grace of heaven
 Had failed in fruitfulness? The harvest there
 Was of an earlier growth, was earlier reaped.
 There sooner rose the champions of the Lord
 To fight his battle with the world and hell;
 There sooner won the victory, and received
 The promised crown.

And thus in following times,
 Carthage, and Egypt's opulent domain
 Of evangelic lore, and later yet
 The imperial city of the east which heard
 The golden-tongued Chrysostom, and whose halls
 Resounded with the first and noblest pledge
 Given to the common faith. Great as they were,
 These once renowned and loved abodes of truth

Now scarcely know her name. But why enquire,
 Wherefore it is that thus the light awhile
 Hath faded from those lands? Go, ask as well
 Why the sun sets, and leaves the few that watch
 To pray in darkness: or why winter strips
 Vale, plain, and forest of their loveliness,
 That hope and faith when joy has done its part
 May grave their deeper lines upon the soul?
 Though not a trace remains of that which once
 Gave glory to the forms which erst bespoke
 God's presence, 'mid the cherubim, not less
 Certain the oracle, nor less to us
 The value of its voice.

But like the flow

Of the great ocean, or some mountain stream
 Destined to travel far, and on its way
 To lose some silver waves on barren strands,
 Or, 'mid ungrateful rocks, so will it be
 With the diviner streams of living truth
 Which have their source in God, but in their flow
 Leave not unvisited, nor unrefreshed,
 The darkest wilderness.

Still trace we then

The steps of him, who to observant souls,

And faithful, loving hearts, is life and light,
 Restoring and replenishing with grace
 Whate'er He blesses.

Far behind us lie

Those days of signal triumph, when the name
 Of Jesus bowed the hearts of savage tribes:
 When armed alone with love, adventurous men
 Dared to confront the monarch on his throne,
 The priest amid his idols, and the chief
 Burdened with spoils. And far remote the day
 When, led by faith divine, the pilgrim sought
 Thuringian forest-depths, and built him there
 A little hermitage, in time to be
 The centre of a happy rural world,
 But yet not wholly lost to us such signs
 Of God's advancing kingdom. Far beyond
 The boundary line where social progress yields
 To barren winter, or the burning wastes
 Of torrid climes ; and where the traveller turns
 With weariness or dread from regions reft
 Of all that seems deserving of a thought ;
 Even there the ambassadors of Jesus find
 Signals divinely planted ; monuments
 Of peace and mercy ; nor can terrors daunt,

Nor the blank waste, nor man's corrupted soul,
 Itself the darkest wilderness, divert
 One from his way or purpose who hath heard,
 As faith may hear, God's voice upon his path.
 And hence, from age to age, and clime to clime,
 That word shall echo which the dead may hear,
 And hearing wake to live no more to die.

Even thus by meditation and in prayer,
 And thought long fixed upon thy living word,
 The soul may haply, blest Redeemer gain
 Familiar knowledge of thy ways and speech,
 Nor wholly fail some lineaments to trace
 Of thy dear image, while, with patient love,
 Thou didst thy work on earth.

But though thy form,
 In its meek grace and majesty, may rise
 To eyes illumined, and thine accents fill
 Our innermost nature, with the pure delight
 Which first thy voice inspired, a nearer way
 Thy Spirit will accord to those who seek

Communion with Thee. To Thy throne we look,
 And see Thee in thy glory: to the world
 And trace thy footsteps, by thy power; and yet
 A further gaze; and lo! we find Thee here
 In our own homes and hearts. O be it mine
 Thus to behold Thee! Let thy Spirit still
 Help me trace thy course from yon bright sphere,
 Where thou art owned by seraphs as their Lord,
 Till Thou hast shown me as thou didst of old
 To those who loved and sought Thee, where Thou dwells't
 With most delight: then lead me forth again
 Through each wide province of thy kingdom here,
 And be at last a dweller in my home,
 Each day and hour with some familiar sign
 Telling us of Thy presence.

Not remote,

Even in thy glory, art Thou to the soul
 Which worships Thee in spirit. Though thy throne
 Be far above those stars whose primal rays
 Have not yet reached our orb, yet winged with thoughts
 Which grace divine creates within the heart,
 The humblest of thy children may ascend,
 And where thou art converse. Nor least when grief
 Weighs heavily upon them, and the world

Hath done its worst to fill them with distress;
 For then thy loving voice that call repeats
 Which first allured them to Thee; and they stand
 In the full light of life, the nearer Thee,
 The more of life, and life increasing still,
 The nearer to thy glory.

Saviour! teach

My heart to know the sweetness of thy word ;
 To feel thy promises its own ; to hail
 Thy presence in its inmost core ! Thou, Lord,
 Wer't long to me a stranger ; at the most
 Heard of as wont to cheer the weak, and help
 The sorrowful in his need, sometimes there rose
 Strange feelings in my soul: thoughts more defined,
 And visions such as infant faith creates,
 When nought disturbs her : but still far away
 Seemed to me all those paths whereon 'twas said
 Thy people met Thee : they were nought to me,
 The native of another clime—the denizen
 Of barbarous state remote. I could not dare
 To leave my wonted ways, to say farewell
 To those old cisterns of corrupted thought,
 Whence fancy or the world had furnished me
 With all that I had known of mental life.

Fainter and fainter grew the thirst for power
 Such as Thy word hath promised, as my love
 For that which was about me gathered strength ;
 For I forgot that even the earthly tie
 Had not been strong, but for the life which Thou
 Did'st give to all its fibres. Dearest Lord !
 I thank Thee with the offering of my heart,
 For that which Thou hast done for me and mine ;
 For those redemptive sufferings which have bowed
 Justice to mercy ; for the light which streams
 From opened fountains of divinest lore,
 The learning of Thy schools ; for hopes which were
 Mere shadows of our evanescent thoughts,
 But now are bright realities : nay, more !
 For the whole life which in my being grows
 Daily and hourly, and, combined with thine,
 Becomes a nobler consciousness.

Thus, Lord,
 Saviour and Friend ! my soul would fain proclaim
 What to thy love it owes. O teach me still
 In Thee to know thy Father—Thine and mine !
 And when thou hast thy perfect work fulfilled,
 Making me like thyself, then let me come

And see Thee face to face, and talk with Thee
 Amid thy people, those whom thou hast framed
 To be thy peers, and then with them to join
 In whatso'er it is thy will to do,
 Mid realms and systems stretching far along
 The pathways of eternity.

But while

My work is here, and memory oft will brood
 On the sad past, the sad because the past,
 Be with me on my daily path : be there
 Where'er my duty calls ; and when my thoughts
 Turn to the earth, then let thy Spirit wake
 The better reason in me. As thou seest
 'Tis good or fit for me, do thou accord
 The clearer light which even here reveals
 Thy presence, till no more my heart may doubt
 That thou art at my side, at home, abroad,
 In storm and sunshine : in the day of toil,
 Of care or anguish, and no less when hope,
 And natural delight return.

O thus,

Thou to whose cross I owe the peace which gives
 Freedom to thought, and from whose spirit flows
 Whate'er of good is in me, thus O Lord !

Shed on my daily path—the common road
Of toilsome life—the graces of thy love:—
So bring thy kingdom round about my home :
So plant it in my soul : there reign and be
All that Thou art where thou art best adored !

THE END.

MINOR POEMS.

The Guardian Angel.

I.

My spirit, in a lonely hour
Of solitary musing, strayed,
Seeking beyond its earthly bower
For love, in his own light arrayed ;
And forms of beauty, that had been
Long traced in mystic lines within ;
And music, whose sweet tones had crept
Into my bosom while it slept.

II.

Its search o'er earth had been in vain—
For there love seemed so oft to shine
With plumes that borrowed light from gain,
It scorned the idol's worldly shrine ;

And things, whose loveliness did seem
 Awhile almost as pure and bright
 As those sweet forms of which we dream
 When drunken with hope's first delight.

Oh! change came o'er them drearily,
 Like clouds upon a sunny lake,
 In which the blue and lovely sky
 Was imaged for the dreamer's sake:
 And music, though sometimes the tone
 Of its deep melody had brought
 Around the heart that seemed alone,
 The forms of warm, embalming thought—
 The charm would pass away, or be
 But one of earthly revelry.

III.

And thus the spirit sought in vain,
 'Mid things that are the loveliest here,
 For that which it had sighed to gain,
 In woe and weal, for many a year.
 It was not that the flower-clad earth,
 The beautiful and glorious light,
 In which the mind's bright forms have birth,

And brilliant shapes of far delight;—
 It was not that love's secret spell,
 The music that is breathed around
 From all the thousand streams that well
 In concert with its magic sound;—
 It was not that they had no charm,
 That weary, dreaming heart to warm,
 Or that its hope had never shone,
 Begirt with beauty's starry zone :
 But it had wandered far away,
 Into a realm of brighter day ;
 And when it found a world of bliss,
 Could it be glad in one like this ?

IV.

'Twas in a vale, a flowery vale,
 Full of those bright, eternal flowers,
 Which only meet the living gale,
 And angel eyes of heavenly bowers,
 Close by a stream, whose waters shed
 O'er all around ambrosial light,
 Retired, a Guardian Spirit led
 One whom, through many a weary night,
 'Mid contest dire and peril hard,

His unseen hand was wont to guard.
'Twas evening such as eve may be
Where time is not—the mystic course
Was in its change when wondrously
All things in heaven, from its full source,
Drink in a deeper bliss,—the wings
Of the all-glorious seraph choir
Were folded, and the golden strings
Sent forth from each celestial lyre,
Deep awful melodies, that pealed
Through all the plains etherial-bright,
Like fountains that till then were sealed,
Or floods of new created light.
Save that celestial strain, no sound
Was heard in Heaven, and onward led
By the communing love profound,
Which their exulting spirits fed,
The Angel brothers wandered far,
Through many an odorous shade to where
Is born that golden-crested star
Our morning meets with perfumed air,
And strains of sweet and mellow glee,
That breathe of Heaven's felicity.

V

They sat them down beneath a shade
 Of glorious trees, through which the dew
 Of buds and flowers that never fade,
 Fell on their locks of sunny hue,
 And low and sweet their voices blent,
 Breathing of that pure element.
 They were both bright—celestial fair,
 Those glorious forms which rested there ;
 But he who seemed the elder born,
 In the eternal realms of morn,
 Had o'er his brows a light which shone
 Deeper, as if the flame had grown
 More fervent with the longer draught
 Of life, that there his spirit quaffed ;
 And, as he turned his radiant face,
 The fullness of that inward grace
 Beamed love upon the eyes it met,
 Eyes—with earth's tears so newly wet.

VI

Loved stranger ! to this land of ours,
 Thus spake that elder spirit mild,
 There is not in these happy bowers,

Which hail thee now their deathless child,
 One tongue of all the host divine,
 That hails thee with such joy as mine.
 It was when heaven was calm as now,
 And here and there an angel-band
 Looked downward, with illumined brow,
 O'er radiant spheres or father-land ;
 My gaze was fixed upon the earth,
 In which thy mortal frame had birth,
 When from the Eternal's throne I heard
 My name pronounced, as he whose eye
 And saving arm thy steps should guard,
 Through all thy earthly destiny.
 I paused not,—but with beamy wing,
 Shot downward my unmeasured flight,
 Nor veiled me, till within the ring
 Of the dark earth's incumbent night ;
 And soon, like one of those sweet sounds
 Men hear, yet know not whence they come,
 I filled with deep, sweet calm the bounds,
 And inmates of thy natal home.
 Thy head was pillowed on the breast
 Of her from whom thy being sprung ;
 And there was silence round thy rest,

While glad hearts o'er thy slumber hung,
 Some eyes were wet with joy,—and where
 One gazed with deeper thoughts, beside
 Thy mother's couch, a low, calm, prayer,
 Half heard, upon the stillness died.
 That hour was blest,—through all the years
 Thy path was in yon vale of tears,
 The prayer that then was breathed for thee,
 Made part of thy heart's history.

VII

Thy early home was where the earth
 Smiles greenest in the summer's mirth,
 And glassy streams, and birds, and flowers,
 Are more than dream-like types of ours.
 It was a deep and lonely dell,
 Around whose marge the shadows fell
 From many a brown and pine-clad steep,
 That saw the young laburnums weep,
 And the blue, sleepy hare-bell wave
 By fountain-bank, and mossy cave.
 Morning, and starry evening, there
 Were living spirits in the air,
 And through the loneliest covert shed

Music and odour, and the light,
 In which the flowers that make their bed
 In free or secret paths delight—
 There was thy home,—and when thine eye
 First opened to the arching sky,
 And to thine ear familiar grew
 The voices of the breeze and stream,
 I looked into thy heart, and knew
 How bright would be its early dream.
 Thy footstep soon had left its trace
 By every shallow brooklet's side,
 And found its fairy resting-place
 Where'er the violets, deepest dyed,
 Peeped from the shelving bank, or bird
 Of long and mellow note, was heard.
 To me my task was light ;—to thee
 It was of mercy full and high,
 Set by the same divine decree
 That bade thee live—and joyously,
 As if thy spirit had dwelt here,
 Or happier been than aught below,
 I led or followed thee where'er
 The gentlest gale might sweetest blow ;
 Or sight, or sound, or odour bring,
 Nearer some bright imagining.

VIII

Unfettered with thy form of clay,
My pure, clear sight could see where lay
All the fair forms the sun would wake,
Ere bird or flower were in the brake.
Unfettered I could meet the spring,
When from the south she first took wing,
And hail her on from vale to vale,
Till, warmly soft, the odorous gale
Fanned into beauty all thy bowers.—
I knew where deepest sunk the showers
Of the soft dews of which are made

Those small sweet-scented plants that lie,
Lowly and meek, through every shade,

Like stars scarce seen in the blue sky.
And ere the nightingale was heard,

Far off, in the lone poplar grove,
I marked the melancholy bird,

Busy about her work of love ;
Happy, where the thick branches met,
A mother bird—not childless yet !
There was no bower, where the wild rose
In the spent summer latest blows ;
No nook in the cleft rock, where run

The cold clear springs that fear the sun ;
 No shelter, where the wild bee plies,
 In the faint light of autumn skies,
 Or vine-leaf trellised cave, where hung
 The clustering grape, deep purpling, till
 Heavy with its sweet dew it clung
 Thickly to the low-shelving hill ;
 Or aught of beautiful or fair,
 That skims like light the ambient air,
 And make their rich and fragrant tombs
 Of dying flowers and faded blooms ;
 Not aught of these were hid to me,
 Purer than zephyrs and as free.
 And, like an elder brother pleased
 With his young charge, I led thee on ;
 And much thy curious toil I eased,
 Leading thee when thy step was wrong,
 Through easier paths, before unkenned,
 Or guiding thee to those sweet shades—
 Sweeter because known but to me—
 Where I had seen already blend
 All the fair things of mountain glades,
 Kept in their rosy urns for thee.

IX.

Sometimes a different care was mine :—
Not seldom did thy path incline
Down the rough steep, where scarcely ground
Was left for the light goat to bound,
Or by deep lonely streams, whose tide
Crushed rocks o'erhung on either side,
Showing no bank or winding way
Where human foot might safely stray ;
And sometimes it was where the bourn
Of the dark forest sends a mourn,
And chilling damp, mixed with the din
From its morasses far within.
Thou thought'st not then how madly vain
It was, thy human strength to try
When the rough storm, with broken rein—
A lion of the air—passed by,
And red and luridly the sky
Gleamed, like a chieftain's council tent,
Crested with banners battle-rent.
An arm was round thee in that hour,
Which felt not the fierce tempest's power—
A shield upon thy heart, that flung

Back to the hurtling storm its brand,
 And with the strength unshaken hung,
 That might beseem an angel hand.

X.

Those days passed not, nor left with thee
 The glory of their vernal sun.
 The light of thought grew in thy breast,
 And made of thy young memory
 A palace of sweet fancies, won
 From the deep fountains where they rest,
 And the strange web of life is spun.
 Time changed them to the solemn forms
 That fits the spirit's holier mood ;
 And thou wert taught by the wild storms
 And voices of thy solitude,
 To look into the boundless sea,
 Where time meets with eternity,
 And to the forms of earth are given
 The semblance and the hues of heaven.
 I shared thy pleasure in the change
 Of storm and sunshine ; shared with thee,
 In loving long and free to range
 Through Nature's filled immensity,—

Like a young bird of summer, now
 Rejoicing on the first green bough,
 And now like one, whose pinions proud
 Are made to race with wind and cloud.
 But mine was to look down from where
 The everlasting fountains flow,
 Which fill the pure, illumined air
 With light and music ; and the brow
 Of every perfumed hill is bright
 With glorious beings who, like me,
 To minister or share delight,
 Spend half their immortality,
 And hither come again from far,
 To tell of their own favourite star.

XL.

Here was my home,—and here I saw
 The mysteries of that nether sphere,
 Which circled thee around, revealed.
 The book of the unchanging law,
 That measures, to each world its year,
 Lay with its wondrous page unsealed ;
 And high upon their golden thrones,
 I saw the monarch angels stand,

To whom the blue ethereal zones
 Are yielded for their high command.
 But thou! the thoughts that filled thy heart
 Rose but as its deep feelings stirred
 The spirit that lay hid beneath
 The veil of its more earthly part.
 Thou lov'dst—and love at first to thee
 Was the sweet music of sweet thought,
 Knowing not how it came to be,
 Or how its first sweet note was caught :
 A bright concentrating of all fair
 Hopes, thoughts, and wishes into one,
 Which the young heart but thinks to share,
 And feel its heaven of gladness won.

The angel's voice had changed ;—He spoke
 Of good ill sought—and grief ill borne ;
 Of an untempered heart that broke
 At the first trial of its strength ;
 And how it mixed its love with scorn,
 Its grief with glory—till at length
 No one could read the mystery
 Of that strange heart, save he whose eye
 Had watched it from its infancy.

Death and the Port.

A DREAM of darkness and of dread
Hath pass'd upon my brain—
A vision of the past—the dead—
That ne'er may come again ;
And there was on my weary heart
The weight of many years,
And woes that were the sternest part
Of all its griefs and fears.

I have not wept—no ! I may weep,
Nor sigh again for aught,
It was a long and dreary sleep
Of the heart's inward thought ;
I saw the frowns of worldly men,
The scorner and the proud—
I felt my spirit dark as when
It first beneath them bow'd.

Yet life has been to me the clue
 Of an enchanted grove,
 Where over paths of varied hue,
 We track the bower of love.
 I've seen upon this troubled earth
 At times a heavenly gleam,
 That warn'd the spirit of its birth,
 As in a glorious dream.

And I have felt,—they knew not how
 Who trod this earth with me—
 How deep may be the kindling glow,
 The bosom's hallow'd glee,
 When thought can bear itself along,
 A pilgrim of delight,
 And find, like its own realm of song,
 A realm for ever bright.

My lot hath been a lonely one—
 The loneliness of mind,
 That makes us while the heart is young
 Half scorners of our kind ;
 The panting of the soul that yearns
 For love it hath not known,
 The stoic pride of soul that spurns
 At love not like its own ;

These have, at times, it may be, shed
 A gloom upon my path,
 Hope, baffled hope, and passion fed,
 The spirit—and its wrath—
 But what my earlier wrongs have been,
 It boots not now to think,
 There was too clear a light within,
 For holier hope to sink.

'Twas well—I have not felt in vain
 Life's weariness and woe.
 The thoughts that wring the heart with pain,
 Which but itself can know,
 Have better taught my soul to dare
 Its own high path of bliss,
 Unmov'd—unbow'd—unchang'd—to bear
 Far darker pangs than this.

O Death ! thou com'st to me as when
 Thy step was o'er the tide,
 And thou unveil'dst thy form to men,
 Where He, th' Athenian, died ;
 Or, gentler, when with vigils sweet
 Upon the midnight air,
 Thou com'st where chasten'd souls repeat
 Their last and cheeriest prayer.

I see the land where Hope hath made
Her everlasting rest,
And peace, that was long wont to fade,
Leaves not my soothed breast ;
The strains that o'er my slumbers hung,
The forms my pathway crost,
The lov'd in thought—each perish'd one,
The sear'd heart loved, and lost—
They are around me, bright'ning still,
From their ethereal clime,
Not clouded, as before, with ill,
With mortal woe or crime—
And far away with them I track
Thy deep, unfathom'd sea—
Hail to the hour that calls us back !
Pale Vision, hail to thee !

Death and the Captive.

Liberty ! Liberty ! thou hast heard
My weary prayer at length,
But the plumeless wing of the captive bird
Is shorn of its buoyant strength ;
I am too weary now to roam
Through sun-light and through air,
To bear me to my mountain home,
Or joy if I were there.

Liberty ! Liberty ! thou hast been
The prayer of my burning heart,
Till the silent thoughts that were within
Into life and form would start ;
And, O ! the glorious dreams that roll'd,
Like scenes of things that be,
And voices of the night that told—
“The captive world is free !”

Liberty ! Liberty ! I have prayed
 To see thy form again,
 And borne, with spirit undecayed,
 The dungeon and the chain ;
 But darkling art thou come to me,
 In silence and in dread,
 And round thee many a form I see
 Of thine own tombless dead.

Ah ! altered is that glorious mien,
 That burning brow of pride,
 That shone before me in the scene
 Where patriot thousands died :
 All changed since when I bore the brand
 In glory and in youth,
 And saw my leagued brothers stand
 For Freedom and the truth.

Long years of woe have chill'd my breast,
 And faint my spirit grows.—
 Here now my drooping head might rest,
 And here could find repose ;
 But darkly as thy shadow gleams
 Before my weary gaze,
 Thou hast brought back the blessed dreams
 Of youth's unclouded days.

O ! lead me forth where'er thy reign,
 Where'er thy dwelling be ;
 I would bear all I've borne again,
 To feel one moment free ;
 To feel my soul no longer press'd
 By this dim night of woe,—
 To know, where'er this heart may rest,
 The living light shall flow.

Frown not ! I once could brave for thee
 Whatever might betide,—
 And I have borne the misery
 That few could bear beside.
 There were who loved me,—where are they ?
 Friends, country, home, and name,—
 They have passed like a dream away,
 But left my heart the same.

I've bartered all to see thee smile
 Upon my native shore ;
 Nor change I, though my rest the while
 Be on a dungeon-floor.
 The love of woman, or man's praise,
 I sigh not now for them,—
 It is enough that distant days
 Shall wear thy diadem.

Yet leave me not again to lie
 Through untold years of gloom,
 I would once more behold the sky
 And earth's unwasted bloom ;
 Not yet hath hung the chilly air
 So murky in my cell,—
 The heavy darkness seems to glare,
 The heavy night-gales swell.

And art thou she—the holy one !
 Whose banner o'er the world,
 Before their destined race was run,
 Chiefs, prophets, saints, unfurled ;
 Art thou the starry form that bowed
 Beside the patriot's shield,
 When, with clos'd lips and bosoms proud,
 They bore him from the field ?

Thou art not she,—I know thee now !
 The glorious dream is past,—
 There is a fever on my brow,
 And life is ebbing fast.
 Unmoved I bow me to thy power,
 Stern friend of human kind !
 Thou canst not make the spirit cower,
 Which fetters could not bind.

Emblems.

There is a freshness in the air,
A freshness in the sky,
As if a new-born sun were there,
Just seraph-throned on high;
And birds and flowers and mountain streams,
Rejoicing in his infant beams,
Are glad as if the winter's breath
Had never breathed the blast of death.

Softly along the silent sea
The light-winged breezes creep,
So low, so calm, so tranquilly
They lull the waves to sleep;
And, oh! as gladly on the tide
Yon lofty vessel seems to ride,
As if the calmly heaving sail
Had never met a sterner gale

And in a small, sweet covert nigh,
 Her own young hands have made,
 A rosy girl hath laughingly
 Her infant brother laid;
 And made of fresh spring flowers his bed,
 And over him her veil hath spread,
 With looks as if for ever there
 His form would bloom as young and fair.

And shall these pass away, and be
 A wreck of what they were;
 Shall birds, and flowers, and earth, and sea,
 And yon proud ship, and boy so fair,
 Be blasted with the tempest's rage,
 Or worn with poverty and age,
 Till all of life and hope shall seem
 A heart-deceiving, feverish dream?

Yes!—and 'tis but few years we need
 With retrospective eye;
 In their repeated tale to read
 Our own home's history:
 We know their end—to us—to all—
 They are but blossoms, and they fall;
 But yet young life, the sun, the flowers,
 Are sweet as they were always ours.

For they are emblems to the heart

Of things it cannot see,—

Emblems which have their counterpart

In heaven's eternity ;

And though their day be short, or done

With our lost hours, or setting sun,

They are within their moment's flight,

What there shall be for ever bright!

Meditation.

I stood alone with night, with ancient night,
And full of awe, and deep distress I wept :
My soul in vain looked up, and prayed for light.
The heavens were dumb; the powers within them slept:
Nature had left her wonted seat, and time
No longer taught the spheres their theme sublime.

I was alone, methought, 'mid nothingness.
Fearfully beat my heart : and once it felt
That fain it would have changed that strange distress,
Into the wide waste void itself to melt:
Rather with nothingness a nothing be,
Than have the power to see, and nothing see.

But soft, as from eternal fountains, rose
 A voice within me : 'twas my soul which spoke;
 And as it spoke, new worlds in deep repose,
 But beautiful as heaven, upon me broke :
 Things of all kinds, of every shape and hue,
 Peopled those worlds, and filled the charmed view.

Those worlds how rich in light and forms they were !
 What joy it was to find them growing still,
 And that amid the darkness things so fair
 But waited for the quickening of my will :
 That while without me all was void and waste,
 The spirit within new spheres of life had traced.

I mused awhile; and then my memory spoke,
 And told me that 'twas thus in infancy,
 When first my soul to conscious life awoke,
 And felt what 'tis a living soul to be;
 And in itself, or of itself to build
 Systems and worlds such as itself hath will'd.

There was in that which as a child I thought,
 A pure reality,—a sovereign truth :
 It vanished as the nearer view I sought,
 The bolder, but the grosser aim of youth.

Nor came that vision back till thus I found
My heart from all its earthly chains unbound.

O sad at first it was to feel a world,
So full of dear familiar forms as this,
Receding from me, till I thought it hurled
Into the depths of an unknown abyss :
And then to know that what we freedom call
Is to have lost, or to be lost to, all.

But joy unspeakable now fills my soul :
Again I feel its quick, creative powers :
Thought claims and wins its rightly owned control
O'er fitful fancy and the vagrant hours ;
Lonely no more, a world around me grows ;
Around it life, a mighty ocean flows.

That world which from my vision passed away
Was but a phantom of a feverish dream :
Its suns and stars like meteors which play
Along the bank of some unwholesome stream.
This world of thought and spirit is the sphere
Of all that hope can give, or fancy rear.

The English Mother.

An English Mother!—at that name

How many thoughts arise!

Some sacred as an altar's flame,

Aspiring to the skies;

And some that make the spirit weep

With its own joy, profound and deep;

Or prompt the patriot vow that starts,

The watchword of our English hearts.

And some, the earliest born of mind—

Love's syllables of thought,—

The dew of blessing that we find

In after seasons wrought

Into those golden cords that wreath

Together all the forms that breathe—

The good, the beautiful, the bright—

And earth with heaven—and love with light.

But, still and tranquilly, a train *

Of tender memories come—

Heralds of gladness—nor in vain

They whisper now of home.

An English Mother !—fair and bland,

In sweet composure round her stand,

Peace, hope, and beauty, fond to shed

Their mingled glories o'er her head.

Hail, happy dream !—with joy I see

The tranquil, home fireside ;

And hear the voice of evening glee,

Mirth's deep, and gentle tide ;

That drowns each day-born, sullen care,

But mars not true love's thoughtful air,

Nor that deep peace which ever tells

Where'er an English Mother dwells.

The seasons change, but still the same

Her sympathies and joy ;

The first that to her bosom came,

Her bosom still employ :

Some gentle care, some fond design—

The golden ore of her heart's mine—

Giving to every mood of thought,

A sweetness from affecto caught.

And now, in mind, I wander round

The small and quiet glade,

Whose green and flowery hedge-rows bound

A little nook of shade :

An English Mother's garden-bower !

And there she sits, from hour to hour,

Filling, with visions soft and mild,

The innocent bosom of her child.

An English Mother !—blessed name !

The brave, the good, the free,

May link their virtues and their fame—

Their hopes and vows with thee !

And base be he, and base shall prove,

Who knows an English Mother's love,

And hath not from its fountain drawn

Of truth the love—of ill the scorn !

Rejuvenescence.

There's a gladness in the voice of youth and its song
 'mid summer bowers,
When the sun is on its golden car, and the dew upon the
 flowers ;
It comes like our own voices back from a past and happy
 scene,
So fair that nothing after is so fair as what has been.

There's a gladness in the look of youth, and its smile of
 friendly glee,
When it meets with gladness like its own, as simple and
 as free ;
It warms our bosoms like the thought of those that with
 us dwelt,
Ere friendship to another shrine than friendly hearts had
 knelt.

There's a gladness in the step of youth, and its bearing
 frank and high,
 That the proudest despot of the earth would tremble to
 defy ;
 We follow it as if it led to the very mountain's side
 Where we chased the fleet hare in her speed, and the bold
 stag in his pride.

There's a gladness in the sleep of youth, and its calm
 unbroken rest,
 With the dew of blessing on its head, from the fountain
 in its breast ;
 There's nothing in our after years of weariness like this,
 Till when the heart is young again in its sabbath years of
 bliss.

O ! we might weep to feel, that though soon our years be
 told,
 The spirit of our hearts has fled before our hearts are
 cold ;
 To feel the loos'ning of our limbs, and bowing of the
 head,
 Before the narrow couch we need to slumber on be spread.

But there's a better strength within than strength of
heart or limb ;

A shining and a burning light, whose lustre grows not
dim ;

And though while creatures still of earth our outward
form decay,

The spirit of our inner man grows stronger day by day.

The First and Last Hour of Day.

I.

I watched the night, the loving night :
The happy stars were full of glee :
They owned her queen, and shed their light
And marched round her throne triumphantly :
Till she rose, and led them toward the east
Where the great day-hours had made their rest.

II.

Sumptuous and proud did their forms appear,
As they robed themselves in the rays,
Brought from the treasure-house of the year
And kept for high summer days :
Gorgeous in light they swept along :
Night envied them not with her starry throng.

III.

But there were two hours among the rest
To whom no festal robe was given :
Timid as birds which had left the nest
Before they could wing their way to heaven.
Sweet Night looked at them, and whispered the star
That always stood nearest her silver car.

IV.

O hasten, she said, and bring to me
Those modest downcast hours :
And let us, dear handmaids and sisters, see
Whether there be not in our bowers
Robes that will give them a look as fair,
As those haughty lords of the upper air.

V.

And the pensive hours were brought to her :
She kissed them with kisses bathed in dew
Of nectarous life : and odours and myrrh
And incense thrice blessed, she around them threw :
Then she looked at the robes which the stars had brought
And fondly the best, and the meetest sought.

v.

For the one of her petted hours she took
 A purple vest and a silver veil ;
 A roseate crown, and a jewelled book,
 That in hymn or song she might never fail :
 And the gentlest of all the stars, said she,
 Should often be near her for company.

vii.

And the other of those two hours was fair,
 As fair could be, but somewhat shy :
 Her eye was grey, and grey her hair,
 For she had wept right bitterly,
 As she looked on the days which one by one
 Had gone to their grave with the setting sun.

viii.

Night chose for her a robe whose hue
 Was varied as its varied fold,
 Russet and green and pearly blue ;
 And a pure coronel of gold :
 And she taught her a melody wond'rous sweet,
 Such as no other hour could repeat.

IX.

And the happy hours left the throne of night.

The one with her joyous look and song
Was far advanced in her gladsome flight,

When majestic day and her train came on :
But the other awaited the day's decline
With a quieter, holier lustre to shine.

Dream Music.

I heard sweet whispers, such as were to sound
What shadows are to forms :—melodious, deep,—
They crept into my heart, and there they found
The chord they sought, and which they seemed to sweep,
Wooing it into harmony with those
Whose music wakes when weary hearts repose.

I know not whether of the past they spoke,
Those soft, low whispers, or of future things :
Perchance they were a little streamlet broke
From the eternal hills whence glory springs,
And all that to our human hearts is dear,
Lives in the love that is unmixed with fear.

Long time may pass before again I hear
In my lone heart those shadowy sounds again,—
They were enough to tell me there is near
This earth of ours, and weariness and pain,
A sphere involving spheres unknown to night,
Where life shall be all life, and fond delight.

The Far and Near Home.

I LOOKED on the bright and burning sun,
When he set beneath the wave,
And red clouds o'er the dark earth hung,
Like banners o'er a grave:
The ocean, in its farthest bound,
Had a wild and fiery hue;
And I thought I heard a living sound
From the lands I might not view.

It spoke not to my inward thought,
As if on land or sea
There lay the home my heart had sought,
Or where its rest could be ;
And I felt as if the hopes were gone
That soothed my heart before,
When I thought the sense of woe and wrong
Might be lost on some far off shore.

I watch'd till the stars of evening shone

In the blue vault of the sky—

But I felt my spirit dark and lone,

'Mid their infinity ;

For, in that vast and glorious shrine,

Where a thousand bright worlds hung,

Could I single out that world of mine

To which my thought had clung?

I turned me to the earth again—

To a lone and silent dell,

Where a fountain hushed the sleepless brain

As its gushing waters fell:

A quiet grave was at my feet,

Where one I had fondly cherished slept ;

And the calm of that resting-place was sweet

As the thoughts of him I wept.

And where then found my heart its home?

'Mid the bright isles of the main?—

Or, was it where whate'er may roam,

Hath now no mark of pain?

O! was it not in that quiet place,

Where the suffering heart might see

The repose of that which bore the trace

Of its own mortality?

Love's Growth.

I knew them when the rosiest light of love was on their
brow—

When their hearts were throbbing deep and quick—first
conscious of its glow.

Beautiful were they in its joy, and the brightness of
their truth,

And musical as silver harps the voices of their youth.

I walked with them through many years—their gladness
shed a light

O'er a path which my own fate or hopes had never made
so bright—

And every sun that rose and set, their love more fervent
grew,

As if heaven never from their hearts its morning beams
withdrew.

And sweeter seemed the tones of each gentle voice to
 sound,
As time and converse fond and sweet, their souls more
 closely bound ;
And brighter every day I thought, their beaming brows
 became,
With the living thoughts that nurture hope, and love's
 undying flame.

I saw them in their happy home, and by their winter
 hearth,
The world nor harmed them with its lures, nor tempests
 with their wrath ;
A charmed life was in their hearts, a spell divinely
 wrought,
O ! would that oftener human hearts that spell divine
 were taught !

Love changeless kept all else from change, and glad they
 past along,
Life's course but varied as the flow and measure of a song ;
And time prest on them, but with form so gracious and
 so mild,
I ever deemed their smiles the same I loved so when a
 child.

Beautiful were they in their youth—and when I saw
them lie

In their last sleep I looked and knew man's spirit could
not die.

Love filled them with its purest light, their hearts its
place of birth,—

O! would that bright Immortal dwell in shrines that are
but earth?

Woman's Prayer.

She bowed her head before the throne
Of the eternal King,
The sun upon her forehead shone
With the first light of spring;
In meekness and in love she stood,
A thing of mortal care;
But pure and strong is womanhood
In faithfulness and prayer.

She had been chastened with that woe
The young heart, in its pride,
Ill bears when wakening from the glow
Love's happy dreams supplied;
But she had in her weakness sought
The Spirit's strength and food;
And faith within her soul had wrought
A deep and fervent mood.

The people of her father-land
 Had left their onward path;
 And God had raised his threat'ning hand
 Against them in his wrath;
 Her voice arose with theirs—the few
 Who still were faithful there;
 And peace was given, and healing dew,
 To Woman's voice of prayer.

The king sat in his purple state,
 And power—dominion-robed;
 But there was darkness in his fate,
 His sick'ning heart was probed:
 And priest and peer their vows preferr'd
 With quick and courtier care;
 But whose on high was soonest heard?
 Sad Woman's lonely prayer.

Wild war was raging—proudly rose
 The chieftains of the realm;
 And thousands met their country's foes
 With spear and crested helm—
 And thousands fell, and wrathful men
 Raged in their mad despair;
 What heard the God of battles then?
 Meek Woman's secret prayer.

Oh! strong is woman in the power
Of loveliness and youth.
And rich in her heart's treasured dower,
Of strong, unchanging truth;
But who may tell her spirit's might,
Above what strength may dare,
When in life's troubles and its night
Her heart is bowed in prayer?

Human Good.

Blessings be upon you
Happy girls and boys ;
I am much your debtor,
For I share your joys :
Brighter than the sun,
Warmer than its rays,
Ye give to me again
The fairest of my days.
When I look on scenes,
Just radiant with the spring,
Though beautiful they be,
But doubtful thoughts they bring :
The song of birds is sweet,
And sweet the scent of flowers,
But those I called mine own,

Went with my early hours.
And now such things as these,
Though loved for what they are,
Speak never to my heart,
Or speak but from afar.
Not so the happy look,
The voice of love and glee !
Whoe'er can feel 'tis bliss
Such things to hear and see ;
There is a primal law
Which gives to him a share
In all the good they bring,—
In all the grace they bear.

A Garden Rose.

Not, fragrant rose ! in Tempe's vale,
Or Pæstum's ancient grove,
Thy living sweetness wins the gale,
To tell how flowers can love.

A fair and simple English rose,
Dear flower, is all thou art ;
But fondly as thy leaves uncloze,
Thou speakest to my heart.

I weep ! and on thy bosom lie
The silent evening's tears :
Sweet rose ! I know that thou and I
Have kindred with the spheres !

Justice.

The evening drew on cold and drearily :

Men of stern hearts felt sad, and women sighed,
As a dim veil spread over earth and sea,
'Twas on such eve that some dear friend had died.

Darker and darker fell the night ; and low

Rough, sullen winds came flitting on its path :
Sometimes they seemed to shriek ; then mutter slow
Not of their own, but of another's wrath.

Men could not sleep that night : they walked beside

The banks of rivers, or in fields and woods,
Measuring the swiftness of the angry tide,
And talking of old world-destroying floods.

At length the air grew still ; and onward came

The tempest which the winds had heralded ;
Straight from his hand he launched the forked flame,
The messenger and minister of dread.

And whither sped the bolt ? Where fell the shaft ?

Struck it the home were some rich usurer slept ?

Or pierced it his fierce heart who scorning quaff

The purple wine while others prayed and wept ?

Or sought the barbed flame the hideous cell

Where murder fought with time and mad'ning fear,

And clutched each new-born hour to make it tell

Whether the home of souls was far or near ?

Not this or that the mark at which was sped

That night of storms in fiery vest arrayed :

The bolt fell crushing on the haughty head

Of a proud priest who had the truth betrayed !

Time.

There was a time when sadness o'er me came,
Thinking years fled so fast
That all would soon be past
Which bore imprest upon them any name
To which my thoughts had lent
Some symbol of content.

But now I feel that, let but time flow on
With current smooth and swift,
So that its waves may lift
My bark of life, for no rough voyage strong,
Over the shallow reefs to shore
Then I will sigh no more.

THE END.

SLEE AND SON, Printers,
Marshall Street, Golden Square,
London.

